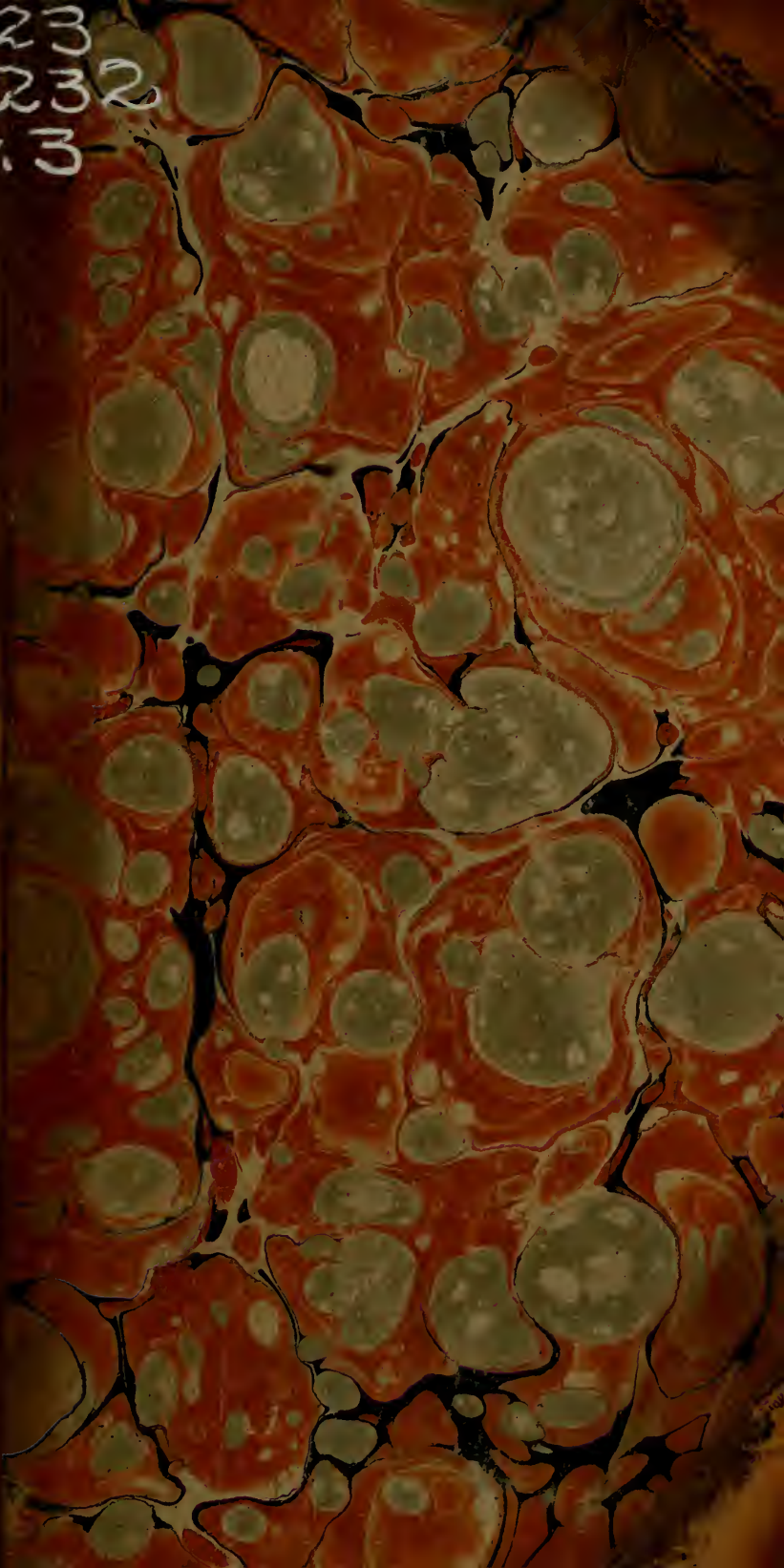
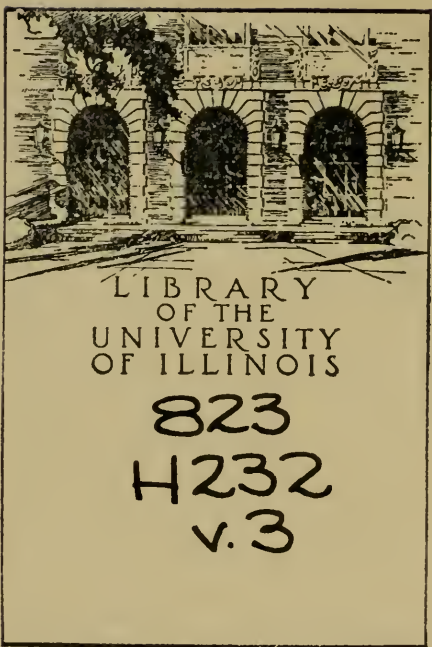


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Isabella Baker

HAROLD THE EXILE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle and each dreadful scene.
In darkness and in storm he found delight:
Nor less than when on ocean wave serene
The southern sun diffused his dazzling shene.
Even sad vicissitude amused his soul:
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear so sweet, he wished not to controul.

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HAROLD THE EXILE.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE following morning our travellers bade a melancholy farewell to the Sicilian shores ; and, after a quick and prosperous voyage, again hailed that land, to which they now returned, mourning over the extinction of those delusive hopes, for ever annihilated by the rude stroke of death.

With feelings of mingled tenderness and regret, Harold took leave of Colonel Leslie and the amiable Charlotte, from the former of whom he received, at parting, a small packet, directed to himself,

in the well-known hand of Gabrielle ; and, on unclosing this sacred pledge of her remembrance, as he pursued his solitary journey into Wales, he found it to contain the miniature, which he had relinquished at her solicitations, on the eventful morning they had met so unexpectedly in Harley Street, accompanied by the following billet :—

“ TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD HAROLD.

“ The hand of death, my Harold, dissolves those irrevocable vows, which, in this world, have torn us asunder ; and, at the moment when I regain the privilege of loving you, I restore to your possession the resemblance of her, who will, when you receive it, be mouldering into dust. Let it, Harold, resume the place it has so long occupied—next your heart. And oh, may it prove the guardian of your virtue no less than of my memory. The woman, whose happy destiny may be united to your’s, will not, I trust, regard this feeble image with a jealous eye.

To her I resign, in this world, my title to Harold, but, in a better, he will, I hope, be for ever united to his

GABRIELLE."

"And couldst thou suppose," exclaimed Harold, "that any other being would have power to efface this dear image from my heart? No, never, never! here shall it remain, till life itself is extinct!" and, with an involuntary burst of love and sorrow, he replaced the portrait of Gabrielle in his bosom.

In perusing again and again this precious billet, and in gazing upon the lovely resemblance, thus unexpectedly restored, Harold beguiled the hours of his melancholy journey to Llanivar, where a shock awaited his arrival, which convinced him that it was still possible for his present affliction to be considerably augmented.

Lady Harold, it appeared, a few days prior to her son's return, had experienced

a paralytic seizure, of the event of which her medical attendants were still dubious. An express had immediately been sent off to Harold, which, of course, he had not received; but her sole anxiety he heard was to behold him again, and she reckoned with scrupulous minuteness the hours and days which must necessarily elapse, before she could reasonably expect his arrival. Though reduced, by her late attack, to a state of great helplessness and debility, her faculties were still vigorous and unimpaired, and her joy at his return convinced Harold that her mental energies had sustained no diminution from her corporeal malady.

The anxiety excited by his mother's situation was, perhaps, at this period, a real advantage to the latter, as the claims continually made upon his time and attentions, while she remained in this state, prevented his mind from being solely engrossed by one painful, hopeless source of melancholy contemplation; and the self-

approbation attendant upon his filial cares and tenderness, served, in a considerable degree, to tranquillize his own mind. In the mean time he had the gratification of seeing this beloved parent considerably amended. The powers of motion were, in a great measure, restored, and a trial of the Bath waters being earnestly recommended by her physicians, it was finally resolved that they should pass the ensuing winter in that city. Hither, therefore, they repaired early in December ; and the apparent benefit sustained by her ladyship, after staying there a few weeks, seemed to authorize their opinion, respecting her ultimate recovery. A residence at Bath made no material alteration in the life of Harold, whose time and attentions were exclusively devoted to his mother, and his days continued to present the same unvaried scene of regular and monotonous existence, when an incident occurred, which gave a new colour to his future fate.

Accompanied by her son, Lady Harold was one morning taking her usual walk on the parade, contiguous to the pump-room, when their attention was attracted by a party in deep mourning, consisting of two gentlemen, and the same number of ladies. The younger female, who was apparently in ill health, involuntarily fixed the transient gaze of Harold, as she passed, by the extreme elegance of her figure ; and, on hastily glancing at her countenance, under the large bonnet which overshadowed it, he beheld, to his great surprise, the features of Lady Emily Desmond, who, on beholding him, fell back insensible into the arms of one of her companions. All was now confusion and alarm ; every one being solicitous to assist the fair stranger, round whom a crowd was soon collected ; when, anxious to escape from further observation, she was supported by her friends into a neighbouring shop, whither they were followed by Lady Harold and her son.

who had been immediately recognized by Lady Barbara ; and the latter, though well acquainted with the real cause, attempted to impute the indisposition of her niece to the effects of a sudden surprise, which her delicate state of health rendered her unable to sustain.

“ Has Lady Emily been long unwell ? ” tenderly enquired Lady Harold.

“ Her health has for some time been greatly declining, and the severe shock her feelings received from the sudden and violent death of my poor dear brother, was followed by such alarming consequences, as induced me to hurry her here, in the hope that change of scene would be beneficial in a disorder which is entirely nervous.”

“ Good Heaven ! the Earl of Temora dead ! ” exclaimed Lady Harold, extremely shocked at the intelligence ; but she was prevented from making any further enquiries by the recovery of Lady

Emily, who, flinging herself into her ladyship's arms, shed on her bosom the sweet and bitter tears of sensibility. The gentlemen who had withdrawn to a little distance while the usual means had been taken to effect her restoration, now advanced, and the two strangers were introduced by Lady Barbara, as her nephews, the present Earl of Temora, and his brother, the Hon. Capt. Desmond. Both were handsome and elegant young men ; but the great likeness which the latter bore to his lovely sister, particularly excited the attention of Lord Harold, who, as we have already mentioned, cherished an almost fraternal regard for the sweet Emily, whose too evident ill health he now observed with feelings of unfeigned regret ; little supposing, however, that the circumstance he lamented, had its origin in a concealed and apparently hopeless attachment, of which he was the object, augmented by grief for

the loss of a tenderly beloved father, killed by a fall from his horse while pursuing the pleasures of the chase.

When sufficiently recovered to walk, Lady Emily expressed a desire to return home, and the party accordingly separated, after exchanging cards of address, and with a promise of soon meeting again.

It is necessary to possess a mind whose innate and habitual feelings were constituted like Lady Emily's, to have cherished with the same romantic enthusiasm, an affection which seemed to acquire fervour from its very hopelessness, if we would form an adequate conception of those emotions which this unexpected interview with Harold had awakened in her feeble and impassioned heart. More than three years had now elapsed since they last met, without effecting any change in the sentiments with which he had inspired her. They had grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength, had sur-

vived the annihilating powers of neglect and absence, the attacks of calumny as well as the effect of time, and the matured reflection of the youthful woman, had only served to confirm the fond prepossession of the romantic girl. Much had occurred during this interval, which was calculated to shake this deeply rooted passion from the hold it had hitherto maintained. The hopes and fears excited by the marriage of Gabrielle Montgomery, the despair and anguish which had wrung her heart on hearing of Harold's entanglement with Lady Marchmont, had in vain conspired against it. Love, fertile in expedients, found ready excuses for his conduct, and the errors which only excited her pity were not likely to eradicate his image from the mind of Lady Emily, encouraged as she was in her attachment by her sympathising, but ill judging aunt, who fed with hope the flame she should have laboured to extinguish.

In the mean time, the health of the

unhappy Emily gave way under the influence of a slow corroding sorrow, and she cherished with secret satisfaction the idea of being soon removed from a state of existence which her own weakness had served to embitter. To a mind thus enervated by the effects of imagination, the pressure of real affliction became insupportable, and the death of her father was followed by such alarming indications of approaching mental derangement in Lady Emily, that her distracted aunt and affectionate brothers precipitately hurried her from Ireland to London, and from hence to Bath, where they had arrived only a few days previous to the interview before mentioned.

In the heart of Lady Emily, the sight of Harold, his changed and melancholy appearance, his languid and dejected manners, excited every feeling of pity and tenderness, of which that heart was susceptible. To the death of Gabrielle, which she had lately learnt, she imputed

some part of this alteration ; but a still larger portion originated, she believed, in the compunctious feelings of an ingenuous mind, for its temporary aberration from the path of honour and rectitude, which its own innate principles must have condemned. At all events, Harold was evidently unhappy, and that conviction would have been sufficient to soften the heart of Lady Emily in his behalf, even had it been less disposed than it really was to sympathize in his feelings.

In the renewed intimacy which now took place between the families of Temora and Harold, our hero experienced a degree of pleasure to which he had been long a stranger. Ingratitude and deception had chilled indeed the glowing sensibilities of a heart formed by nature to find its chief happiness in the kind and social affections ; but though chilled, they were not extinguished, and his present situation again called forth those feelings of sympathetic tenderness which

he had vainly believed no human being could ever more awaken.

We have already mentioned, that during the short period of their former acquaintance, Harold, who merely regarded her as a lovely and interesting child, had innocently augmented the growing attachment of Lady Emily Desmond, by the endearing and fraternal familiarity of his manners, and by those marks of preference, those nameless flattering attentions which impress the heart more forcibly than the most laboured professions of regard. The events which succeeded their separation, events so fatally involving his own peace and happiness, had, in a great measure, effaced her remembrance from his mind ; but when any circumstance of accidental association occasionally revived the recollection, it never failed to be attended with those feelings of affectionate regard connected with the image of the lovely artless girl, he had formerly known.

In the Lady Emily, he now met so frequently, Harold recognized but few traces of her he still remembered. Three years had made considerable alterations in her person, now matured into a perfect model of feminine loveliness, which even in her present state of delicate health, had acquired in interest what it had lost in bloom. But the playfulness and gaiety of her manners had given place to a deep dèjection, a chilling reserve, that surprised and distressed Lord Harold ; who, unconscious of her feelings, and confident in his own, felt hurt at this apparent diminution of regard, in one for whom he cherished so warm a sentiment of fraternal friendship, and sincerely deplored that too evident sadness whose cause he vainly endeavoured to discover.

During the early part of her life, Lady Emily had been almost constantly separated from her brothers ; first, from the long absences necessarily attendant upon their education in another kingdom, and

afterwards, in consequence of their mutually embracing a profession which only allowed of short and unfrequent visits at home. On the death of their father, Colonel Desmond (now Earl of Temora) immediately quitted the army, and his brother, though he did not follow his example, gladly availed himself of the opportunity afforded him by his leave of absence of passing a few months in that domestic circle to which he was almost a stranger.

It was now that the characters and dispositions of these near and tenderly beloved relations were first disclosed to Lady Emily ; and her young heart soon directed its preference towards the amiable and affectionate Everard, her youngest brother, in whose susceptible feelings and gentle manners she traced a congeniality to her own. It must not be inferred from this, that Lord Temora was either unworthy of his sister's affection, or that he did not cherish the same sen-

timent for her. On the contrary, the conduct and character of the former were unimpeached; his ideas of honour, nice almost to fastidiousness, and his feelings ardent, even to excess; but there was a severity in the virtue of this high-minded young man—an impetuosity of disposition and manners which inspired the mind of Lady Emily with an involuntary awe, mingled with the affection she bore him.

Rigid in principle, and unblemished in conduct, Lord Temora never excused in others those errors he would have condemned in himself, and that tenaciousness of honour, which formed the prominent feature of his character, infused a degree of jealousy into his tenderness for Lady Emily, who was no less an object of his pride than his affection.

He was too much alive to the consequences which must result from any deviation on her part, not to regard her conduct with a scrutinizing eye, and in

proportion as he became acquainted with the romantic turn of her mind and sentiments, the greater was his apprehension of her danger, and his anxious watchfulness over the object of his care.

The resemblance which existed between Desmond and Lady Emily was not solely confined to person. Their characters, in many respects, were likewise similar ; for, to the warm heart and vivid imagination of his countrymen, he united no inconsiderable share of the romantic spirit which distinguished his sister, and to this restless and enterprising spirit he was indebted for many difficulties, and dangers, from which his more prudent brother had been exempted.

With mind and sentiments so closely allied to her own—with a temper the most sweet, and manners the most prepossessing, it cannot excite wonder that Lady Emily should cherish a sensible partiality for the gentle and engaging

Desmond; but to Desmond, dear as he was, she dared not confide the treasured secret of her heart, and the former, though he secretly suspected some concealed attachment had a share in producing the air of pensive dejection, visible in the looks and manners of his sister, was restrained by delicacy from endeavouring to extort an unwilling confidence, though he could not sometimes forbear in his gay moods from raillery on the subject of her melancholy. The emotions betrayed by Lady Emily at the unexpected sight of Harold in the promenade, had at first given rise to surmises in the mind of Desmond, which were strengthened by her ill-disguised agitation whenever his name was mentioned, and by that mixture of tenderness and reserve which marked her manners when in his presence. But whatever her sentiments might be, they were evidently unknown to, and unshared by Harold, and a delicate regard

for the feelings of Lady Emily confined the suspicions of Desmond to his own breast.

From him, therefore, Harold could gain no satisfactory reply, when he interrogated him concerning the probable cause of his sister's apparent unhappiness, which he affected to consider as a mere constitutional melancholy, aggravated by her present ill state of health; and Harold, in whom the sight of Lady Emily in this situation, by perpetually reviving the recollection of Gabrielle, awakened the most painful feelings, sighed involuntarily over the fate of a being inferior only to her he could never cease to deplore. But the veil which now obscured them was soon destined to be removed from his eyes, and a new trial awaited him, which his wildest conjectures would never have led him to anticipate.

CHAP. XXXIII.

ON returning one morning from a solitary visit to her friends in Laura Place, Lady Harold appeared unusually agitated, and her eyes still betrayed the traces of recent tears. She, however, evaded the enquiries of her son, and the conversation turning upon the party she had just left, the latter could not refrain from lamenting the change which had taken place in Lady Emily Desmond since the period of his first departure from England.

“It is, indeed, greatly to be regretted,” replied Lady Harold, sighing deeply, “that one so young, so lovely, so truly amiable, should be thus prematurely condemned to an early tomb, and for such a cause !”

“What cause?” exclaimed Harold, extremely surprised.—“Have you ever

heard any assigned for the present melancholy situation of Lady Emily?"

"I have," answered his mother, "and find that its source must be traced in the slow corroding sorrows of a concealed and unrequited attachment."

"And can there exist that man who could reject—who could be insensible to the attachment of such a woman as Lady Emily Desmond?" returned Harold, warmly.

"That man certainly does exist, and if I know him rightly, insensibility is by no means his characteristic. You are no stranger to him yourself, Harold, and will, I trust, exert the influence I am well assured you possess over him in behalf of our lovely and too susceptible friend."

"My dear mother, you speak in enigmas. With the exception of her own brothers there is no man with whom I am even on terms of intimacy. How, then, can I have any influence with the

object of Lady Emily's concealed affection?"

"What, Harold," replied his mother, "if that object should be—yourself?"

"Me!" exclaimed Harold, in a tone of dismay and anguish, "Lady Emily love me? Oh, Heaven forbid it should be possible!"

"My dear son," answered Lady Harold, "it is, I am convinced but too true. More than three years ago, in the very morn of her life, the young and guileless heart of Lady Emily surrendered itself your captive. For three years this solitary and cherished affection has been an inmate of her bosom—has survived the effects of absence and of time, the exaggerations of your misconduct, and, above all, your own continued indifference; and to this unfortunate affection she will, I fear, ultimately fall a victim."

"And is Lady Emily," said Harold, after a long silence, "aware that you are acquainted with her secret?"

“No, on my soul, she is not. Never has it passed her lips to any being but her dearest and earliest friend, her excellent aunt, by whom it was this morning, most incautiously, I believe, communicated to me, accompanied with earnest injunctions of secrecy, ‘as Lady Emily,’ she says, ‘could never survive the idea of becoming an object of contempt, or, at most, of pity to the man she loves.’”

“Why, then,” enquired Harold significantly, “have you disregarded Lady Barbara’s injunction, in thus extending her confidence to me?”

“Because,” answered her Ladyship, “I wish it should touch your heart as it has done mine, and awaken a sentiment of pity for the sweet unhappy Emily.”

“Heaven witness for me,” exclaimed Harold, “that I do pity her—tenderly, sincerely deplore an affection of which I confess myself unworthy!”

“And that is all, Harold,” replied his

mother, "which you can do to restore the peace you have so unfortunately destroyed!"

"My dearest mother," he exclaimed, "what is it you would require of me? There is I perceive something lurking in your mind which you hesitate to express."

"Harold," answered she, after a momentary silence, "I will no longer conceal my wishes. This is no time for dissimulation, and you compel me to speak plainly.—It would be useless," she continued, "now to remind you of your mother's affection. It commenced with the first dawn of existence—it has constantly followed you through all its varied scenes until this moment, and my love for you will be the last earthly sentiment which warms my heart."

She paused—and Harold much affected, pressed his mother's hand, in token of acknowledgment, but he forbore interrupting her, and she again resumed—"You are my only son, Harold; the last

surviving descendant of a noble race, which must become extinct, or be perpetuated in you. From my present situation, I cannot reasonably expect a much longer sojourn in this transitory scene; and, ere I bid farewell to all sublunary cares, I would willingly behold you in the possession of that domestic happiness, which few are more fitted to enjoy. Oh, Harold, what shall I say more? Lady Emily loves you, with a tenderness which admits not of a doubt. Let me conjure you to consult your own heart, whether you can possibly return her affection."

"Talk not to me of love, my mother," exclaimed Harold, in much agitation; "for never, never more, will my path of life be illumed by love's delightful ray. From me it has for ever vanished, and the heart it has desolated is become dead to its future power."

"Believe me, Harold," returned his mother, "you are deceived; a heart like your's was not formed for the cold and

cheerless apathy in which despair has plunged you. Make but the effort to conquer it, and you may yet taste of happiness. Were Gabrielle still living, I would not urge you thus, but death has now dissolved that affection, which her union with another had before rendered hopeless ; and can you, Harold, behold, without emotion, the untimely fate of a lovely, amiable young creature, whose only fault is a too susceptible heart."

"Would to Heaven, I were in my grave," exclaimed Harold, in a melancholy accent, "since I seem only destined to bring misery to all with whom I am connected."

"On yourself alone, my dear Augustus, does it depend to change the misery you have involuntarily occasioned, into felicity."

"Marry Lady Emily Desmond, and in so doing, repair the wrong you have, in some measure, committed, by that tender and fraternal regard which fed the flame

she cherished. The new and sacred ties you then assume, will gradually obliterate the bitter remembrance of the past, and you will experience, in a renewed tranquillity, the recompence of this sacrifice to gratitude and honour. If, after such exalted motives, I may venture an inferior consideration, shall I suggest to you the pleasure to be derived from a conviction of having diffused comfort to the last hours of your mother's life, by imparting to her the soothing hope that she leaves you happy."

As she ceased speaking, Lady Harold extended her arms towards her son, who, impelled by an involuntary emotion of love and reverence, sank at her feet ; and, as she raised and enfolded him to her maternal bosom, the sacred tears of filial tenderness mingled with those which she shed on the pale cheek of Harold.

"My mother !" he at length exclaimed, "I am yours. Dispose of my future destiny as best pleases you. Only allow

me time to comply with your wishes—to eradicate, in some degree, those recollections which might prove incompatible with the duties incumbent on me.”

“ You shall have every indulgence, my beloved Harold,” replied his mother, embracing him with transport, “ which you can desire ; but do not long delay your determination, or it may be too late to save Lady Emily.”

“ I merely wish to be assured that we are not deceived in the intelligence you have now communicated. This conviction obtained, I will be directed in my future conduct by your wishes.”

“ Your own generous heart, my Harold, will be your best guide. I would only recommend a little caution in your behaviour to Lady Emily, who would, I know, reject the suit which she suspected pity alone had prompted. Beguile her then, at least, with the show of tenderness—with a belief that your professions were voluntary, if you would not add

fresh anguish to that wound you desire to heal; and, above all things, keep from her your knowledge of her attachment."

Harold promised his mother a strict adherence to these injunctions; and a knock at the door announcing the arrival of visitors, he hastily made his escape, to indulge in solitude those reflections which the recent conversation was calculated to excite. But reflection, at this moment, demanded an effort beyond his power. His heart, stunned as it were, by the intelligence he had just received, was only conscious of a new cause of disquietude, whose precise nature he was unable to determine; and he was not entirely awakened from this mental trance, when he was warned by his mother that it was time for him to fulfil an engagement to spend the evening in Laura Place.

None of the party were yet arrived, and, on entering the drawing-room, he found Lady Emily alone, a circumstance

which by no means served to tranquilize his spirits, agitated as they still were from the events of the morning. A more than common appearance of reserve was visible in her manners, which increased the embarrassment and restraint that a consciousness of her secret sentiments had created in his own ; and, unable at length to sustain any longer a conversation (if such it might be termed,) which was confined to a few common-place observations and replies, Harold drew her harp towards Lady Emily, and requested she would favour him with a song.

“ I have sung but little lately, my lord,” answered her ladyship, with a faint smile, “ and am quite out of practice ; but, if you will mention any air which pleases you, I shall be happy to make the attempt.”

Harold bowed his acknowledgments ; and, on turning over the leaves of a music book, an involuntary impulse made him

pause at a song, the words of which were only too expressive of her secret feelings, and he silently placed it before her.

Lady Emily seemed to hesitate, but it was the struggle of a moment only, and, gracefully sweeping the chords, with a light and tremulous hand, she began the beautiful and plaintive melody of — “ Hope told a flattering tale.” While Harold, as he stood at a little distance, earnestly regarding her, could not but secretly acknowledge that he had never (one excepted) beheld a being more lovely and interesting. The simple elegance of her dress corresponded with the style of her beauty, which was rather calculated to charm by its delicacy and softness, than to dazzle by its resplendency ; and the mild pensiveness which hung upon her brow, like the summer mist, veiling, but not obscuring, the face of nature, finely harmonized with the

pearly and transparent hues of a complexion whose purity was scarcely excelled by the white and stainless roses, entwined amid the glossy ringlets of her auburn hair.

He observed too, that her eyes were humid, and the sounds they attempted to utter seemed to tremble on her lips. Yet she evidently struggled to subdue her feelings, but the effort was too much ; and, in repeating the last stanza, her voice entirely failed her, and she burst into tears. Harold was shocked, but he was convinced also ; and hastily approaching the weeping Lady Emily, inquired, in a manner the most soothing and tender, the occasion of her disorder."

" It is nothing, my lord," she at length replied, " but the effects of low spirits and indisposition. This melody was, as you know, much admired by one whose name I need not mention—and it will be

long, very long, ere his remembrance can cease to affect me."

"Believe me, Lady Emily," answered Harold, "there are none who more truly sympathize in your filial feelings than myself; but, forgive me, for presuming to think that some additional cause must exist for that extreme dejection I have so long observed and lamented; since time," he added, mournfully, "assuages even that most acute of all pangs—sorrow for those who have been torn from us by the hand of death. *Dearest* Lady Emily, you weep! you are agitated! Oh, tell me the occasion of this emotion, which distresses me more than I can express."

"You are mistaken, my lord," faintly articulated Lady Emily; "I am not unhappy—I have no cause for unhappiness, but the one I have already mentioned."

"Then, wherefore are you so changed, so every way altered, from the Lady Emily who, in the days of youth and in-

nocence, once honoured me with her regard and friendship. Am I so much degraded in your esteem, as to be now considered unworthy of your confidence?"

"Oh, no, believe me, Harold!" she involuntarily exclaimed. "Though all beside united to condemn thee, thou wouldst still find an advocate in Emily Desmond." And, fearful she had said too much, the fair enthusiast paused—while she drooped her lovely head upon her bosom, to hide the blush which had stolen unbidden to her pallid cheek.

Touched alike by her sensibility and artless tenderness, Harold could not withstand the appeal thus made to the best feelings of his heart, and he was only withheld by his mother's injunction from abruptly making those proposals to Lady Emily, which he was assured would restore her lost felicity.

The entrance of the rest of the party

prevented any farther inquiries on the part of Harold, and Lady Emily, during the remainder of the evening, did not afford him an opportunity of addressing her on the subject again.

CHAP. XXXIV.

"No!" exclaimed Harold, when he was once more alone, "I can no longer doubt the truth of my mother's assertion. If any plan of entanglement had been concerted between Lady Emily and her friends, she would gladly have availed herself of the opportunity presented this evening of touching the feelings of the man whom she desires to subjugate. On the contrary, she repels every effort to penetrate her secret sentiments, and that too in a manner which admits not a doubt of her sincerity. No! sweet Emily! I cannot hesitate in my belief of thy attachment."

Reflection now presented to him a thousand hitherto unnoticed circumstances, which served to confirm this conviction, and influenced by his usual enthusiasm, his imagination invested

Lady Emily with supernatural perfections, the offspring of his own creative fancy, and pourtrayed her secret attachment as every thing that was tender and heroic, which the devotion of a whole life could scarcely repay. With these impressions, Harold fell asleep, dreamt of Gabrielle, and awoke in the morning languid melancholy and desponding. The glow of imagination which on the preceding night had arrayed every object in visionary hues, was now faded, and the sacrifice he meditated, appeared in its real colours to his oppressed and shrinking heart. It was not merely the idea of a precipitate union, or the voluntary assumption of ties and duties, in which he felt but little disposed to engage, that had power thus forcibly to affect his mind. The necessity they implied of banishing those recollections which it would then be dangerous to indulge, and which now formed the sole charm of his existence ; of disengaging from a “ buried

love" those affections to which the living wife would be justly entitled ; these were the points from which Harold's heart recoiled, and as he pressed still closer the pictured image of her it had so fondly idolized, " Oh, Gabrielle !" he exclaimed, " Is not my destiny in thus surviving thee sufficiently severe, but I am called to forget thee also. To breathe over thy scarcely cold ashes those vows to another which belong alone to thee."

For a moment his resolution failed him, when the idea of Lady Emily, adorned with all the charms of loveliness, simplicity, and artless tenderness, again recurred to his torn and divided heart ; which revolted at the barbarity of letting her become the victim of an affection which his own imprudence had assisted to foster.

His mother too, so worthy of love and veneration ! could he persist in a refusal, which would deprive her declining years of a gratification so ardently desired, as

that of beholding her darling son united to a woman she approved ; and, where should he find a partner for his future days more deserving or more tenderly attached than Lady Emily Desmond ?

“ No ;” he mentally exclaimed, “ I am neither cruel nor insensible ; and, hopeless as I am myself of happiness, I cannot, by a selfish regard of my own feelings, withhold from others that felicity which it depends on me only to confer. Oh, no ; I should despise the wretch who was capable of such ungenerous conduct. Be happy then, my mother, if it is in the power of Harold to make you so ; and thou too, lovely Emily, enjoy the recompence due to thy long tried affection ; Heaven is my witness how fervently I will endeavour to promote thy happiness.”

Whatever were Harold's failings, vacillation of character was not one of them. Once resolved on the conduct to be pursued, he never delayed the execution of his designs, however repugnant it might

prove to his own feelings. The struggle between inclination and principle, was now over, and after a few days anxious scrutiny, the result of which was a firm conviction of the strength and fervor of Lady Emily's attachment, he took an opportunity of communicating to Lord Temora the wishes of himself and Lady Harold, for an alliance with the noble house of Desmond, should such a proposal prove acceptable to his lovely sister, and requested the earl's permission to address her on the subject.

The fastidious honour of Lord Temora would probably have spurned the proffered connexion with Harold, had he been previously informed of one dark shade which had obscured his otherwise bright and unsullied fame; but fortunately for the suitor of Lady Emily, Colonel Desmond, (for such he then was,) had been absent from England at that period when his suspected devotion to Lady Marchmont had furnished a subject

for the ever busy tongue of detraction to comment upon ; and, like other rumours, it had now ceased to be a theme of conjecture or discourse.

Against Harold's proposals no reasonable objection could therefore be urged, since his birth was noble, his family almost as ancient as that of Temora, his fortune ample, and in mind, in person, and in manners, he united every thing calculated to captivate the most fastidious fancy. His offers also were most generous and disinterested ; and Lord Temora, who was extremely anxious to behold his sister under the protection of an honourable and deserving husband, readily granted his consent to the wishes of Harold, on condition that they met the approbation of Lady Barbara, to whom the affair was accordingly communicated, and her joyful emotions at the agreeable and unexpected intelligence, had nearly betrayed the secret so long cherished and concealed.

It is only for a heart as devoted and as hopeless as Lady Emily Desmond's to conceive the feelings by which she was agitated, at the bare suggestion of an event which her most sanguine wishes had not dared to anticipate, and she listened with a degree of incredulity to the oft repeated assurances given her by the delighted Lady Barbara of her approaching felicity.

Her mind bewildered by an excess of happiness, was unable to reflect upon it with composure, nor had the flutter of her spirits entirely subsided before Lord Harold himself appeared to receive his doom, as it is termed, from the lips of his lovely mistress, by whom he was received with the trembling timid bashfulness of one fearful that some unguarded word should betray her conscious feelings.

In answer to his enquiry of "whether Lady Barbara had communicated the motive of his present visit," she could with difficulty articulate an affirmation,

while the rosy hue of modest confusion mantled her pallid cheek, and her blue and melting eyes darted their beams upon the mimic flowers which decorated the floor of the boudoir, where she was seated. And what," continued Harold, "may I hope from her ladyship's communications?"

"The partiality of Lord Harold," answered the agitated Emily, "must always be considered as an honour by her on whom it is conferred."—More she would have added, but utterance failed her, and Harold, after a moment's silence, took her hand, while he exclaimed, with a serious yet tender air, and in a tone of much emotion, "Lady Emily, this is not a time for idle and unmeaning compliment. You are no stranger to the events which have marked my early life with disappointment and misfortune; to those hopes and expectations, now crushed and annihilated for ever. With a heart so desolated by sorrow, so blasted by in-

gratitude, I believed myself destined to pass the remainder of my existence in solitude and indifference. The representations of my friends have conspired with the charms and virtues of Lady Emily Desmond, to awaken hopes of a more cheerful aspect, and if she will deign to accept a heart still bleeding from its former wounds, I will at least venture to assure her of my sincere and unremitting efforts to promote her happiness."

Harold paused, and, smiling through her tears, Lady Emily extended her hand, while she softly replied, "I will study to heal them, my lord; and blest indeed will be the lot of Emily Desmond, if her endeavours succeed in chasing even one cloud of sadness from the brow of Lord Harold."

Touched alike by her sensibility and tenderness, Harold, with an involuntary motion, folded the lovely, artless Emily to his breast, and as he softly pressed

her trembling lips, and felt her warm tears descend upon his cheek, he ceased to regret the sacrifice he had made of his own feelings to restore her peace.

We will pass over the joy of Lady Harold at an event which her own exertions had served to promote, as well as the pride and pleasure experienced by Lady Barbara Desmond, on beholding Harold received as the acknowledged and accepted lover of her idolized Emily ; but we cannot refrain from devoting a few words to the latter, thus raised from the abyss of despair to the very summit of felicity. No longer oppressed by a slow corroding sorrow, her cheek again resumed its faded roses, and with returning health her former dejection disappeared. The cheerfulness which she once believed flown for ever, again animated her looks and language, and her manners displayed an alternate mixture of playfulness and sensibility, that invested her with new charms, even in the

eyes of him whom she was most desirous of pleasing.

Intoxicated with the sense of her happiness, and but little disposed to seek for any circumstance which might diminish it in her estimation, she remarked not how feebly the tranquil and unimpassioned affection of Harold responded to the ardent sentiments of her own heart, and, fortunately for Lady Emily, no officious friend invidiously sought to remove the veil of blissful ignorance that obscured her mental vision. Viewed through the medium of imagination, every object received its colouring from her own delicious sensations, fraught only with ideas of love and happiness; and even the most fastidious of the sex, could have found no reasonable subject of accusation against Harold, who, if not the most impassioned, was at least the most attentive and amiable of lovers, sincerely solicitous to please the object of his avowed preference.

Yet many and severe were his secret struggles to obtain that equanimity of mind, to preserve that uniformity of conduct, which was requisite in his present situation. It would have shocked him to have distressed the woman he professed to value, even by an appearance of indifference ; but comparisons *would* arise, recollections *would* recur, which he found it impossible to suppress. In his hours of solitary meditation, the gentle form of Gabrielle continually haunted his imagination, reviving all those images of love and sorrow, which the remembrance was calculated to excite ; and, in the language of the poet, he might have exclaimed,

“ Oh, what are thousand living loves
To that which cannot quit the dead ? ”

The more intimately he became acquainted with Lady Emily Desmond the more plainly did he foresee the difficulties that awaited him from her romantic character and erroneous sentiments, which

would all militate against the scheme of tranquil domestic happiness which he had formed for the future. That intimate union of heart, that perfect congeniality of mind and feeling he had once tasted with Gabrielle Montgomery, he was convinced would never again be his ; and it was equally impossible that any other woman should ever inspire the same sentiments he had then cherished. A grateful regard, a tender friendship, were the warmest feelings of which his heart was now capable, and could he hope that these comparatively cold emotions would be considered by the tender and romantic Emily as an adequate return for her own ardent affection ? He dared not flatter himself by such a supposition, and Harold already anticipated the uneasiness he should be destined to undergo in that state into which he was now entering.

At present, however, all was well.—Lady Emily appeared, and really was, the happiest of women ; her friends, too, were

no less satisfied with the connexion she had formed—Lord Temora from his fraternal anxiety of beholding her united to a man whose alliance he could approve, and Lady Barbara, and Everard Desmond, from the knowledge they had acquired of her own secret sentiments. In the latter, Harold daily discovered some amiable trait of disposition and conduct, which confirmed his title to his esteem, and he again ventured to indulge a hope of finding in this interesting young man a friend, whose attachment and fidelity would heal the wound which the treachery and ingratitude of Berrington, had inflicted on his heart.

CHAP. XXXV.

As the filial feelings of Lady Emily would not permit her to fix the period of her marriage till the usual time of mourning for her father had expired, it was finally arranged that the intermediate interval should be passed by herself and friends at the Castle of Llanivar, where, as the spring advanced, Lady Harold became extremely desirous to return, and where it was determined the intended nuptials should take place.

Much as Harold dreaded a return to Llanivar, under existing circumstances, he forebore making any objection to the proposed plan, since he wished not to obstruct any design from which his mother appeared to derive pleasure, and was likewise convinced of the necessity of conquering the emotions excited by a place where many of his future days

would probably be passed with Lady Emily. He even endeavoured to conceal from himself the painful feelings which oppressed him at beholding the latter enter, as its future mistress, that mansion where Gabrielle had formerly reigned in the hearts and affections of all its inmates. In seeing her occupy the same apartment which had been appropriated to her—wander beneath the shades she had loved—cull the flowers she had planted, and assume for his mother all those little tender and endearing offices which it had once been the peculiar province of Gabrielle to perform. In all this there was nothing but what was perfectly natural—nothing but what he might reasonably have expected to witness; but yet his tortured heart shrunk from the retrospection; and when, on the morning after their arrival, he beheld Lady Emily enter the breakfast-room with a bouquet of flowers, which she presented to his mother, the remembrance thus forcibly

excited of a similar scene, which occurred the day after his first introduction to Gabrielle, rushed with overwhelming force upon his mind, and he was obliged to make a precipitate retreat from the apartment, to conceal his emotions from the observation of those around him.

But these were not the only trials Harold was compelled to encounter with an appearance of tranquil indifference. Even in those spots which were more peculiarly adapted to awaken the recollections of an enamoured heart, the claims of a new and less cherished engagement were forced upon his remembrance. The hermitage, where enthusiasm had first illumed the torch of Love—that beloved hermitage which had so often echoed to the seraphic tones of Gabrielle’s voice now resounded those of Lady Emily, and the never-forgotten boudoir, where Passion had dared to breathe his infant sighs, was now become the favourite retreat of her to whom he was about to pledge the

sacred vows of wedded faith and tenderness. In vain he endeavoured to banish these obtruding recollections—in vain sought to identify the idea of Gabrielle with that of Lady Emily. The utmost effort of imagination was unable to confound the being so highly gifted by nature and by genius, with the beauteous, simple Irish girl, who, at eighteen, was a child in every thing but love; and each new retrospect of his own feelings convinced Harold that those affections which, during her life, had been devoted to Gabrielle Montgomery, were now for ever buried in her grave.

In the mean while time proceeded with slow but steady pace; the robes of mourning were exchanged for those of festivity, and the day, so fondly desired by Lady Emily, at length arrived, which was for ever to unite her destiny with that of her beloved Harold. The latter, who had long been preparing for the event, beheld its near approach with tranquillity; and,

if his looks did not confess the raptured feelings of impassioned love, they were sufficiently indicative of tenderness to prevent any distrust of his affection from entering the minds of the fair Emily, or her friends, who were now too much accustomed to his generally serious and pensive cast of character, to expect from him any very striking demonstrations of joy.

It was not till the evening that the bridal party assembled in the old chapel of the castle of Llanivar, for the performance of the marriage ceremony, and the scene presented within its hallowed walls, was at once pleasing and affecting. The building itself was ancient, and the fantastic wreaths of ivy that entwined the lofty windows, but partially admitted the beams of the setting sun upon the groups beneath them. The back part was occupied by the tenants and domestics of Lady Harold, all habited in their best attire, and decorated with the gayest

flowers of the season. In the centre were the young girls who had been educated by her ladyship's benevolence, dressed in white, each with a nosegay in her hand, to present to the bride ; who, simply robed in muslin, spotless as the snowy breast it shaded, and graced with no ornaments but those of modesty and beauty, stood by the altar, between Lord Temora and Lady Barbara. On the other side was Harold, accompanied by his mother and Everard Desmond, and the intermediate space was filled up by the friends who had been invited on the occasion.

A profound silence reigned around, and while the venerable pastor of Llanivar, in an impressive tone, read the sacred office, which unites two beings in pure and indissoluble bonds, and sanctifies the law of nature by religious rites, the tears of deep emotion stole down the changing cheek of Lady Emily, and thrilled the soul of Harold with a secret and inde-

finable awe. But, even at this eventful moment, the memory of the past obtruded itself upon him, and, for an instant, disturbed his tranquillity.

Directly opposite the spot where he stood was a private door, through which Lady Harold and Miss Montgomery had been accustomed to enter, when they came to perform their devotions on Sundays or festivals. To this door Harold, unconsciously, directed his eyes; and, on beholding it cautiously unclosed by one of the bystanders, to admit the air, the idea of Gabrielle was immediately associated with the object before him, and so strongly was his imagination impressed by this trivial circumstance, that he almost fancied he beheld her advancing through the aperture to forbid those vows he had once hoped to have pledged to her alone.

The calmness he had hitherto maintained now deserted him. His recollection became bewildered—his gaze im-

perfect ; the figures around him seemed to recede from his view, and the priest had twice demanded an assent to the short but important sentence, which bound his destiny to Lady Emily's, before he could articulate a reply. A penetrating glance from Lord Temora recalled his fleeting faculties, which were completely restored by observing the agitation impressed upon the pale countenance of his intended bride : and, as he placed the nuptial symbol on her trembling hand, his heart fervently vowed to fulfil all the duties of which he had now given her the sacred pledge.

On leaving the chapel, the youthful maidens, who had received from the bounty of Lady Harold the benefits of a religious and useful education, pressed around Lady Emily with their vernal offerings, which were received with a condescending smile, and an expression of thanks. One only seemed to present them reluctantly—a blooming girl of fif-

teen, whom Harold immediately recognized as a favourite pupil of Gabrielle's, by whom she had been honoured with marks of peculiar kindness and regard. He observed the rosy cheek of Winifred still bore the traces of recent tears, and an air of dejection was visible in her countenance, as she silently presented a bouquet of violets and narcissus to Lady Emily. There was something in the girl's manner which forcibly struck him as being very singular ; and when the former passed on, he lingered behind, to enquire of Winifred " whether she had any objection to Lady Emily for his wife, that she offered her the customary tribute of her respect and good wishes with such apparent reluctance ?"

" Oh, no, my lord," replied the simple Winifred. " My Lady Emily is a sweet, beautiful creature, as you shall see in a summer's day ; but we all thought that poor dear Miss Montgomery—"

Winifred's tears here interrupted her

utterance; and Harold could have clasped her to his heart, as the only being who at this moment of supposed unalloyed felicity, sympathized in its secret feelings; but he contented himself with taking her hand, exclaiming in a low and hurried voice, "Enough! enough! Winifred! I understand what you would say: don't weep, my good girl; it was the will of Heaven, and be assured I will not forget your grateful remembrance of"--Gabrielle he would have said, but the word died away upon his lips, and hastily forcing a piece of gold into the hand of Winifred, he flew to rejoin Lady Emily.

Scarcely, however, had the youthful pair returned to the Castle, and received the congratulations of their assembled friends, when an incident took place which converted the scene of festivity into one of distress and lamentation; so frail and uncertain is the tenure of all sublunary enjoyment, even at the moment when its possession appears the most assured.

With her arm entwined in hers, Lady Harold was standing by a window, cheerfully conversing with her lovely daughter, when suddenly her countenance changed, and staggering backwards a few paces, she sank from the feeble grasp of the terrified Lady Emily upon the floor. The scene which ensued needs no description ; every means were used to effect her recovery, and signs of returning life again animated her languid frame ; but the opinion of the medical gentlemen, who had been summoned to her assistance, confirmed the secret apprehension entertained by Harold, of his mother having experienced a second paralytic attack, of a far more serious and alarming nature than the former, which seemed to affect in an equal degree her corporeal and mental faculties.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a change more striking and sudden than the one which took place at the Castle of Llanivar ; where a view of the splendid preparations for the bridal festivities,

rendered the distressing reverse still more awful and afflicting. The sumptuous banquet was removed untouched, the rustic dance of the tenantry upon the lawn abruptly broken up, and the guests who had been invited to grace the nuptials, gradually withdrew from a scene where each one felt his presence was now an intrusion ; Lady Barbara, secluded in the apartment of Lady Harold, was engrossed solely by her attendance on her suffering friend, and every countenance in the little group assembled in the so lately thronged and brilliant drawing-room was expressive of every feeling but that of joy.

Terrified and depressed by the recent event, which came with an additional shock upon her feelings, at the moment when the consummation of her heart's dearest wishes had overwhelmed her with unexpected felicity ; Lady Emily, silent and pale, clung to Harold for that support which he required himself ; and

which Lord Temora and Desmond shocked and confounded by this unexpected incident, were equally unable to bestow. All was sad and silent throughout the spacious mansion ; where, a few hours before, every thing wore the aspect of mirth and gladness ; and the horror-struck domestics, as they glided with noiseless steps through the deserted apartments, seemed like so many pale spectres re-visiting the scene of former joys.

“ And this is my wedding day ! ” mentally exclaimed Harold, as he passed through the splendidly decorated ball-room, in his way to his own apartment, and felt the sense of his present singular situation increased by a view of the scene around him, where splendor (as if in mockery,) reigned amidst loneliness and silence. “ This ” he repeated, “ is my wedding day, and the images of dismay and death which now environ me, may, perhaps, only prove the melancholy omens of my future years. Heaven grant,

lovely Emily, that the malignant star which rules the destiny of Harold, may not extend its fatal influence to thee."

Thus passed the bridal eve of the young heir of Llanivar, and the fair Lady Emily Desmond ; nor did the succeeding day bring with it brighter prospects ; for though Lady Harold had regained, in some measure, the powers of speech and recollection, no hopes of a permanent recovery could be entertained ; and the idea that she might continue for some time in her present state of joyless existence, was not calculated to convey comfort to the bosoms of her sorrowful friends. As their presence under these circumstances could be of no service to the domestic party at Llanivar, and was imperiously called for elsewhere ; Lord Temora and his brother a few days after the inauspicious nuptials of their sister and Harold, departed from the Castle ; the former, on his return to Ireland ; and the latter, to rejoin his regiment, then stationed at Portsmouth.

Lady Barbara, as much from inclination, as in compliance with their intreaties, continued at Llanivar, where her presence and society afforded no small support and consolation to the youthful pair, whose honey-moon, as it is termed, had been thus suddenly overclouded.

CHAP. XXXVI.

NOT to dwell too minutely on scenes which cannot fail to impress with sadness the heart of sensibility, we shall briefly state that Lady Harold never recovered the attack which had seized her on the memorable evening of her son's marriage ; and after lingering a few weeks, breathed her last sigh in the arms of her affectionate and lamenting children, whose tenderness and attentions diffused comfort over the close of an existence which had been passed in a conscientious discharge of the conjugal and maternal duties.

That innate and exalted piety which had directed every action of her life, extended its benign and fortifying influence to her departing moments, which might be compared to the peaceful and tranquil close of a long day, whose alternate storms and sunshine terminate at length

in a serene and chearful calm. Soothed by the retrospection of the past, and resigned to the will of her Creator, Lady Harold might truly be said to “die the death of the Righteous,” and her last breath was spent in pious supplication for blessings on her darling son, and the lovely and amiable being to whom his destiny was now united.

We will draw a veil over the sacred grief of Harold, for the loss of this beloved and inestimable parent, a grief which has its source in the holy feelings of nature, the best affections of the heart ; and which, for some time, defied the united efforts of reason and tenderness to subdue its violence. The death of his mother had dissolved the last relative tie which remained of all those that had formed the happiness of his earlier years. She was the only being to whom memory could recur as to one whose fond endearments, whose unwearied cares had accompanied him through every period of his existence,

from the first dawn of reason to the moment when her eyes had closed for ever on all sublunary concerns. In her, his virtues had ever found a ready advocate—his failings a zealous extenuator ; and this endearing friend, this excellent monitor, was now lost to him, at a period too, when she was more than ever necessary to his happiness. These were the melancholy reflections of Harold, upon the event which had so greatly shocked his filial sensibility, and never was parent more tenderly and sincerely lamented, than the good and pious mother of our affectionate hero.

But everlasting grief is no more commensurate with the mind of man, than unchanging felicity. The desire of consolation is implanted by nature in every heart, and the goodness of Providence permits not the wish to be implanted in vain. When the ebullitions of excessive grief subside into a melancholy calm, the mind sighs for an object to share and

sooth its sorrows ; and that such feelings are natural to the human breast, may be infered from our beholding even the solitary wretch who rejects, or who is banished from all social intercourse with his fellow man, call on irrational and inanimate nature to participate in his woes.

Time as it alleviated the keen perception of his loss, gradually called back the attention of Harold to his present situation, and he endeavoured to derive consolation from the new and sacred ties his destiny had imposed upon him. He had now entered into a state, of all others, the most honourable and important to the individual, and to society, with a heart fully disposed to perform all its duties.

If love had not a share in his union with Lady Emily, its place was supplied by gratitude for her affection, and an earnest desire for promoting her happiness, and with any other woman these

sentiments would probably have been sufficient to ensure their mutual felicity. But the mind of Lady Emily was not formed for moderate enjoyment; with her it was either ecstasy or despair, rapture or agony, and her imagination imbued with the romantic reveries of her favourite Rousseau, beheld no medium between the transports of passion and the cold feelings of indifference. The ravings of a distempered fancy she regarded as the genuine language of love, and the idea of adoration was always associated in her mind with that of a beloved object.

Influenced by such sentiments, Lady Emily had been unexpectedly united to the object of a long cherished and apparently hopeless passion, and in the first transport of anticipated happiness excited by this event, every other idea was absorbed or annihilated. But a few months brought with them feelings of a far different nature, and Lady Emily, who

had expected to find an adoring and devoted husband in the object of her ardent attachment, was hurt at the tranquil and unimpassioned affection of Harold, which was rather displayed in his uniform tenderness and attention, than by sudden starts of fondness or expressions of admiration. Neither his time nor his thoughts were exclusively engrossed by her, nor did he entirely relinquish every intellectual study and manly exercise because their pursuit included a temporary separation from his fair partner. Her society, indeed, was always welcome; but an unavoidable absence did not call forth from Harold any of those violent demonstrations of alternate regret and rapture, which are the criterion of affection in romantic minds. In the eyes of Lady Emily all this was a direct violation of the laws of Love, which required, in her opinion, an exclusive devotion to the beloved object, and her husband could not possibly feel that sentiment for her,

since he was able to find pleasure or amusement from any thing in which she did not participate.

The visionary schemes of extatic bliss and rapturous tenderness, in which her romantic fancy had delighted to indulge, were now completely banished, and with a sensation of extreme uneasiness Harold beheld her lovely brow clouded by inquietude and discontent, and perceived that nothing but her natural sweetness of temper enabled her to retain her usual appearance of good humour. Unconscious of any cause existing for such a change he forebore for some time remarking it; but when he observed her cheerful gaiety of manners give place to silence and dejection, he could no longer refrain from enquiries, whose answer was a passion of tears, and an exclamation—
“That she was certain he did not love her!”

“And what leads you to think so,

Emily," replied Lord Harold, much shocked at this abrupt assertion.

"Because people that really love are every thing to each other, and can have no idea of any separate and individual enjoyment. Now you, Harold, find many pleasures in which I have no share, while I have no satisfaction in any pursuit in which you do not participate. In this case, then, it plainly appears that it is I only who love."

Harold in vain represented to her, that a mutual attachment was by no means incompatible with a difference of pursuit, or an observance of the common forms of society. Lady Emily was not to be convinced, and quoted a hundred absurd writers in support of an opinion as absurd, when, finding that argument on this point was unavailing, he gave up the attempt ; but from that time he neither engaged in hunting, sporting, or any other diversion, which Lady Emily did not share, and

to avoid the uneasy feelings occasioned him by seeing the latter expose herself to fatigues and inconveniences, unsuited to her sex and delicacy, they were soon altogether relinquished.

The change was shortly observed, and freely commented upon, by those who, ignorant of the real cause, amused themselves with the repetition of their own idle conjectures, and while he was by some cried up as a model of conjugal devotion and tenderness, there were others who did not scruple in representing him as one of those contemned and unhappy beings, a submissive husband.

Harold was perhaps to blame in thus sacrificing his domestic comfort to the absurd opinions of a fanciful and romantic girl; but the motive at least was generous and praiseworthy. Conscious how much his own attachment fell short of that which was cherished by Lady Emily, he sought to supply the deficiency by indulgence and attention, and se-

parated as she was from all her other friends (for Lady Barbara had returned to Ireland soon after his mother's decease), he felt that on himself only must depend her present happiness. It was these considerations which now influenced Harold's conduct; but in relinquishing his own independence of action, he had no reward but what arose from an internal conviction of having obtained a noble conquest over himself; for Lady Emily, however she might appreciate, was unable to recompence such a sacrifice to a man like Harold.

It is one thing to be highly accomplished, in the usual acceptation of that term, and another to possess a highly cultivated mind, the first may indeed amuse and captivate, but the latter only can render a woman a suitable companion for a man of sense and genius.

Lady Emily had an undoubted claim to the former appellation; she played and sung delightfully, drew with the

precision of a master, and understood all the languages and sciences, that well educated young women of fashion are usually supposed to understand.

But the ear grows weary of listening to harmonious sounds, and the eye will at length be satiated with the productions of art, however matchless in beauty and perfection. The mind requires relief and amusement from the interchange of sentiment and the charm of intellectual communion with a kindred mind. That of Lady Emily, not originally endowed with very superior mental powers, had not been invigorated and expanded by the nature of her favourite studies or opinions. With her love was all in all; it was or ought to be the actuating motive of every action, the grand and principal business of life, to which all lesser considerations must give place, and the most exalted heroism, the noblest instance of self-devotion, failed to interest her, in which love had no share.

Long and fruitlessly did Harold endeavour to combat these erroneous notions in the mind of Lady Emily, and often when some fresh instance of romantic absurdity had been forced upon his observation, recollection would recur to her whose heart had so closely responded to his own, in whom the perfection of beauty and intellect had been united ; and tortured memory would recall those moments of short lived bliss, when he had beheld her cheek glow, her eye glisten, at the language of heroism or genius. Vainly did he seek to banish the invidious remembrance. It would return in spite of all his efforts. It was the last solitary joy his fate had left him, and where is the being that can spurn from him his sole source of consolation ?

Still, however, there was much to admire and to love in the character of Lady Emily, in her artlessness of disposition, her sweetness of temper, her tenderness of heart. Great allowances he considered

were due to the errors of her education and the false notions she had early imbibed, and Harold yet trusted that when years and experience had corrected the extravagant ideas of enthusiastic youth, the romantic girl would be transformed into the sensible and engaging woman, in whom if he did not meet that image of perfection his enamoured fancy had once loved to contemplate, he should find sufficient virtue and graces to command the esteem and ensure the attachment of any reasonable and reflecting man.

CHAP. XXXVII.

LADY EMILY in the mean time grew weary of the monotonous uniformity of Llanivar, where a constant succession of the same scenes and the same occupations gradually began to pall upon her young imagination, which secretly sighed for a more intimate knowledge of that world of which she had as yet only stolen a glance; and she at length ventured though in faltering accents, and with downcast eyes, to hint to Harold her wishes to visit the metropolis.

“ You are then tired of Llanivar, are you Emily,” answered he, with a half-suppressed sigh.

“ Oh, no, my Lord; I cannot be tired of any place while you are in it : but you know we have been no where else since our marriage, and it must not be sus-

pected that Lord Harold wishes to seclude his wife from the world."

"Nor shall it be suspected," exclaimed Harold, with a glowing cheek, and in a tone of ill disguised emotion. "Only give your directions for a removal, and I am ready to accompany you when you please."

Lady Emily was in raptures at this ready acquiescence with her wishes, and her expressions of delight had in them so much *naïveté*, were so indicative of her simple artless disposition, as to bring an involuntary smile into the pensive countenance of Harold, on which the events of his early life had long since substituted the "pale cast of thought," and the serious brow of reflection for—

"Mirth's vacant smile, and pleasures's jocund mien."

A few days then, beheld Lord Harold and his fair bride settled in their mansion in Portman Square, which soon became the resort of the gay and fashionable world; and at court, at the opera, at

every place of public diversion where she appeared, the young and lovely Lady Emily Harold, was gazed at, admired, and followed.

Our hero was not more devoid of vanity than other men, and his pride was no less gratified by the homage paid to the beauty, and elegance of his wife, than his tenderness by beholding her the most delighted and happy of all beings. When Lady Emily had been formerly in London, she was too young to be introduced much into fashionable society. To her, therefore, every object wore the aspect of novelty, and the most insignificant amusement was capable of imparting pleasure. Life was still in its spring, and its scenes had not yet lost those vivid colourings, that rich gloss, which they borrow from the glowing imagination of youth and happiness. Her only mortification arose from remarking that Harold did not appear to derive from every thing around him, the same sensa-

tions of enjoyment as herself, and in the fulness of her unsophisticated feelings she would sometimes ask him, "Why he seemed so cold and indifferent, when she was absolutely enchanted."

Alas! he could not tell her, "that the scenes which captivated her imagination, presented to him only weariness and satiety, and that it was the nature of all human enjoyment to create in its repetition the same sensations." It would have been cruel thus rudely to dissipate the dreams of youth so soon destined to be dispelled by the sad realities of riper years, and he merely replied, "That the cause existed in the difference of their mutual characters, and that the generally serious turn of his mind, did not admit of such lively expressions of pleasure and admiration as were demonstrated by herself."

Lady Emily was deceived, and was still happy.

One of the first things that Harold did after his arrival in town, was to return a visit which had been paid by his excellent friend Colonel Leslie, when he happened unfortunately to be from home; and as he entered the memorable library, in Harley-street, a thousand painful recollections rushed upon his heart, which prevented him for some moments from returning the cordial greeting of the colonel, who congratulated him upon his marriage with a warmth of language and manner which convinced Harold that he sincerely rejoiced at an event which he fervently trusted would not only confer upon his young friend as much happiness as he could ever again hope to participate, but would prove an effectual preservative against the spells and machinations of Lady Marchmont, should chance once more facilitate their meeting. It was a relief to Harold to hear that Albina was not at present in town, and as he found

the family were then in Scotland, he secretly hoped they would continue there till he had quitted London. In answer to an enquiry after Berrington, Colonel Leslie informed him that he was going on much in the same manner as formerly, and that those indications of regret and contrition, which he testified on the first intelligence of Gabrielle's death, had been speedily evaporated, by a return to his usual habits. "He has already," continued the colonel, "dissipated in profligacy and extravagance, great part of the ample fortune he acquired by his marriage, and his latter days will probably be passed in distress and penury, if the consequences of his vices do not cut him off in their full career. He has already been obliged to sell the estate in Glamorganshire, and spends his time chiefly in town, where, however, I seldom see him, as he scarcely ever enters his father's house, who cannot meet him without reproaches for his profligate conduct ; and often la-

ments to me, when alone, that his name and title must (if he survives) descend to a man who will not fail of disgracing both."

"Unhappy Berrington!" exclaimed Harold involuntarily, "ill as thou hast used me, I cannot refrain from pitying thy present abject and degraded condition. Sincerely do I hope," he added, addressing Colonel Leslie, "that he may yet see and reform his errors, before it is too late."

The colonel shook his head incredulously; and, after some farther conversation, Harold took his leave, with a promise of speedily introducing this excellent and esteemed friend to his fair bride.

It is scarcely requisite to say that this promise was performed, and that as he became more intimately acquainted with the sweet and genuine virtues of the lovely, artless Emily, her happiness was scarcely an object of inferior interest to Colonel Leslie than that of Harold himself.

A short time after their arrival in town, a trifling indisposition one evening prevented Lady Emily from attending a party at the Countess of ——'s ; and Harold, with his accustomed kindness, would have remained with her at home, but this she earnestly opposed, and her entreaties, added to the accidental visit of a female friend, who happened to drop in, at length prevailed on him to fulfil his engagement. The party he now joined was large, and composed of people of the first *ton* and fashion, with many of whom he was well acquainted ; but Harold's spirits were not in their highest state of elevation ; and, after loitering a short time about the rooms, and exchanging a few words of conversation with the lady of the mansion, he was on the point of retiring, when his attention was attracted by the entrance of a fresh party, in which, glowing with her usual beauty, and blazing with even unusual splendor, he beheld—the Countess of Marchmont !

Harold had never seen Albina since he last quitted London, and the unexpected sight of her at this moment struck with a jarring and unpleasant sensation upon his nerves, and his heart thrilled painfully, as if he already anticipated that, in Lady Marchmont, he now beheld the arbiter of his future fate.

His first impulse, of retiring unobserved, was frustrated by the quick glance of Albina, who immediately recognized him, and hastily approaching Harold, in a low voice expressed her pleasure at this unexpected meeting, and congratulated him upon his marriage with an air of the most perfect *nonchalance*. The surprise excited by her presence was nothing in comparison with what he felt at this appearance of ease and indifference ; and he was at a loss in what terms to address her ; when, as if divining the occasion of his silence, Albina continued—" You look, my lord, methinks, as if there was something extraordinary in this address

from me ; but, you forget, perhaps, that it is not in the power of mortals to *eterniser* even the tenderest feelings ; and, besides, you ought not to be surprised or disconcerted at my following the example so heroically given me by yourself. But, *badinage* apart, Harold, I have long been under the influence of a delirium, and have now, thank Heaven, again recovered my reasoning faculties. I thank you also for the share you have had in effecting my cure : and now, since we are both once more included in the list of rational beings, I may venture to remind you of your former promise, and assert my claim to your friendship."

There was in her ladyship's manner a mixture of sarcasm and earnestness, of acrimony and softness, for which Harold was utterly unprepared, and he felt half piqued at a change so little expected in the ardent and susceptible Albina. He could have met the keenest reproaches with less embarrassment and emotion

than this disdainful and chilling indifference, from a being by whom he had been once beloved. After a moment's silence, Lady Marchmont, who read in his countenance his secret feelings, again resumed —“ I do not ask you, Harold, *why* you have so long estranged yourself from your friends ; it is sufficient to say that your absence has been remarked, and commented upon in a manner which may lead to serious consequences. It has given an apparent colour to the invidious reports that have been detailed to my lord, who, for the first time in my life, I have found obstinate, and inaccessible to conviction. If you wish, however, to remove these suspicions, and restore matters to their former footing, I would advise you to renew your usual friendly intercourse with our family. Call upon Lord Marchmont to-morrow, as if you had heard accidentally of his being in town, I will vouch for your cordial reception ; his jealousy will be lulled to rest,

and all things will go on as they should do, to preserve me from disgrace, and yourself from distress, and perhaps ruin, if matters are carried to extremities."

This advice appeared to Harold prudent and reasonable. He knew that if the suspicions of Lord Marchmont were once sufficiently awakened to rouse him to exertion, such evidence might be obtained of his former criminality, as must lead to the most dreadful consequences of exposure and litigation. To avert this evil was now a positive duty which he owed to Lady Emily and her family; and, though well aware of the danger which threatened his peace, his reputation, and his domestic happiness, from its being generally known that he was still a visitor in St. James's Square; the effects which might ensue from the discovery of past and bitterly deplored misconduct, compelled him to subject himself again to the suspicions and censure of the world,

that he might shun those of the individual he had injured.

Dreadful consequence of even one deviation from the path of virtue! Who will venture to assert that the crime, however repented of, may not extend its baleful influence to the brightest and purest scenes of succeeding existence?

The appearance of *nonchalance* which had so forcibly struck Harold in the manners of Lady Marchmont, was, in reality, only one of those schemes of consummate art to which her ladyship was frequently in the habit of resorting, for the promotion of any favorite design. That guilty passion, of which he had been the object, was not eradicated, but it no longer held exclusive possession of her breast, in which other sentiments, no less violent and dangerous, now shared the empire which had once belonged to love alone. The intelligence of Harold's marriage had fallen upon her like a stroke

of thunder, annihilating every hope, and overwhelming her with dismay and anguish ; and, only a lingering regard for public opinion prevented her, in the first transports of her despair and indignation, from betraying the guilty secret of her attachment. Hatred, the most deadly and implacable, against the detested wife of Harold, took possession of her breast, and, from that moment, every thought was engrossed by the desire of revenging on her her own anguish and disappointment. With a thousand vague designs floating in her mind, she hastened to London, on the first intelligence of the arrival of the youthful pair, where the sight of Lady Emily, whom she had accidentally beheld at the opera, and the admiration generally excited by her beauty and the charming simplicity of her manners, served still further to inflame the rancour and jealousy of Albina, who secretly determined to convey wretchedness to the bosom of her rival, even though

she should be herself involved in the destruction she occasioned.

But, to design against the wife, it was requisite to possess an influence over the mind of the husband, and if, as she suspected, the reign of passion was at an end, still Harold was not insensible—was not devoid of grateful emotions, and under the garb of friendship much might be effected when suspicion and distrust were once lulled to rest. Her principal aim was to convince him of her present indifference, and by alarming his fears for the possible consequences of the past, ensure such a degree of intimacy as would assist the execution of her designs.

These were the motives for that alteration of manner, which had excited the surprise and mortified the vanity of Lord Harold, and it was these motives which led her ladyship, in the occasional visits he afterwards paid in St. James's Square, to scrutinize minutely into the nature of those sentiments which had prompted his

precipitate union with Lady Emily Desmond, as well as to ascertain the peculiar character of the fair unconscious being whom she had devoted to vengeance. On the first point, however, all her efforts were unavailing; delicacy towards a woman who so tenderly loved him would not permit Harold to betray her secret, and he successfully eluded all Albina's interrogations; but his conversation in several instances undesignedly revealed to her the romantic turn and enthusiastic disposition of his wife, and though he never mentioned the latter but in terms of tenderness and esteem, the penetration of Lady Marchmont was not slow in perceiving what little congeniality existed between their sentiments, and she soon established it in her own mind as an undoubted fact, that Harold was neither very much enamoured nor very happy. Here, then, was the foundation on which she must lay her designs against the peace and comfort of this devoted pair; and influenced

alike by love and hatred every power of her mind was now called into action to discover the means best suited to effect her nefarious purpose. How she finally succeeded will appear in the sequel.

The arrival of Lord and Lady Harold in town was the signal of gaiety to their respective friends, who mutually vied in demonstrating their joy at a union which appeared so well calculated to ensure the happiness of both parties ; and the entertainments given on this occasion by Lady Emily were the theme of every journal, and the admiration of every spectator.

Nothing of all this was lost upon Lady Marchmont, and it was suggested to Harold that "his wife was *extremely* gay."

"The present," replied he, with a suppressed sigh, "is, perhaps, the only time in which she will be so. Youth is the season of pleasure, and can it be surprising that it should assert its prero-

gative, when even maturer years are not able to resist the bewitching influence."

Albina blushed at the implied reproof, and felt a secret conviction, that it would require circumstances of no small weight and importance to infuse any prejudicial ideas of Lady Emily into the mind of Harold; but she possessed a mind fertile in contrivance and prompt in execution, and the hope that some event might occur which would give a plausible colour to her artful insinuations, enabled her still to support her present assumed character of cold indifference towards the man for whom she was alternately susceptible of the transports of passion, and the violence of resentment, and whom she was resolved to conquer or sacrifice to her revenge.

On coming down one morning to breakfast, Harold found a note from Colonel Leslie, apparently written in great haste and agitation, intreating "his immediate presence on a matter of the

highest importance, which admitted not of delay." Greatly surprised and alarmed, Harold hastily swallowed a bason of tea, and repaired to Harley Street, when his emotions were not much relieved by the distress and disorder impressed upon the countenance of his friend, who appeared pale and agitated, while, after an enquiry of whether he had received a note from him that morning, he continued :—

"I should be at a loss, my lord, to find an excuse for subjecting your feelings to the shock that awaits them, did I not know your generous disregard of selfish considerations when the comfort or welfare of another requires their sacrifice."

"Speak on, my dear colonel!" replied Harold, impatiently, "You cannot possibly demand any thing of me which I should not be disposed to grant."

"Let me first inform you that the treacherous violator of the rights of friendship, the wretched, profligate husband of my lost Gabrielle, now lies dying in

this house, and earnestly implores your presence and forgiveness."

"Good God!" exclaimed Harold, excessively shocked, "Can it be possible? But tell me what fatal accident has reduced Mr. Berrington to this unhappy situation?"

"The consequences of his own vicious and licentious conduct. 'This morning,'" proceeded the colonel, "I rose early, as is my usual custom, and took a walk in the vicinity of the Regent's Park, when as I sauntered slowly along, contemplating the beauty of the rising sun, my attention was attracted by seeing four gentlemen enter an adjoining field, whose appearance at that early hour awakened my suspicions as to their design. They were soon confirmed, when, after measuring the ground, two of the strangers took their places opposite each other, and almost at the same instant discharged their shots. One of them immediately fell, and believing my assistance might

be serviceable, I hastened to the spot, when I beheld in the wounded gentleman the unhappy Berrington weltering in blood, and supported by his opponent, a young officer of very pleasing and interesting appearance, who, on seeing several persons approaching through the park, hastily retreated, with his second, from the fatal spot. I was proceeding to follow him, when Berrington, who guessed my intention, made a feeble effort to withhold me, exclaiming, ‘Detain him not, colonel, I conjure you! He is the brother of a sister whom I have dishonoured, the son of a father whose disgrace has broken his heart. No blame can be attached to him in this affair, in which I only am culpable.’ As Berrington ceased speaking, he fainted, and as I could not, however I might reprobate his conduct, refuse that compassion his present situation required, I had him conveyed to my own house, and immediately sent for medical assistance. On

an examination of his wound, which was in the left side, I read in the countenances of the surgeons that there was no hope, and on me devolved the painful task of communicating to Berrington, the intelligence of his danger, of which till then he did not seem to have entertained any apprehensions. The scene that ensued still shocks me in the recollection: when roused by the prospect of approaching dissolution to a sense of his past crimes, the agonies of an awakened conscience awfully confirmed the assertion of the inspired writer, that, 'There is no peace with the wicked.' Some one happened accidentally to mention your name in his presence, when he started up, exclaiming, 'Who speaks of the injured and abused Harold? Oh if any of you know where he is, in mercy bring him hither, that he may speak comfort and forgiveness to my despairing soul.' It was on this intimation," continued Colonel Leslie, "that I sent

for you here (a messenger had before been dispatched with an account of the melancholy event to his family, who are unfortunately out of town): and can you indeed, Harold, sufficiently obliterate from your mind the memory of his former baseness and ingratitude, as to accord your pardon and pity to this unhappy man?"

"Do not doubt it, my dear colonel," replied Harold, with fervour. "It is true that I am indebted to him for all the misery of my past life; but the justice of offended Heaven has fallen upon his crimes, and man's resentment may surely now be appeased."

Colonel Leslie silently wrung Harold's hand in token of acknowledgement, and after retiring for a few minutes to prepare Berrington for the interview, he returned to accompany Harold to his apartment. They found him sitting up in bed, supported by pillows, and the hand of death seemed already impressed upon his

ghastly features, which, from the united effects of profligacy and recent suffering, scarcely retained a vestige of their former grace and beauty.

At the entrance of Harold he shrunk back and hid his face in the bed-clothes, exclaiming—"Save me, save me, colonel! I cannot meet the presence of the man I have so basely injured. His every look, his every accent, will speak daggers to my heart."

Harold advanced, and taking the hand of the miserable victim of his own vicious principles, endeavoured to compose his agitated mind by repeated assurances of forgiveness; but Berrington withdrew his hand, while an expression of unutterable anguish transfixed his features, and he exclaimed in broken and agonized accents—"Oh no, Harold, it is impossible! You cannot, cannot forgive my barbarous, my ungrateful conduct! I basely sought to corrupt your principles and calumniate your character. With

the infamous hope of effecting your destruction, I betrayed you into the snares of a syren whose fatal fascinations my own experience had taught me too well to estimate; and to complete the black catalogue of my enormities, I treacherously robbed you of the woman you loved—the woman whose gentle heart was broken by my deceit and unkindness. But she is now a ministering spirit in Heaven, while I shrink from contemplating the dreadful prospect of the hell I merit.”

Inexpressibly shocked, Harold was unable to reply, while Colonel Leslie sought, by the aid of that religion, he had openly professed to despise, to convey comfort to the mind of the wretched Berrington, and spoke of the mercy of Heaven, of the hope of the repenting sinner.

“There can be none for me!” he answered, in a tone of deep despair. “Think what advantages I have abused—what

opportunities neglected. Of parents whose grey hairs have been bowed down with sorrow for my crimes—of a friend treacherously deceived and betrayed by my arts into error and wretchedness—of a wife whom my profligacy and ill treatment assisted to destroy. In the days of health and prosperity I scoffed at religion and despised my Maker—in this hour of distress and horror he now abandons me. How shall I presume to address myself to Him, whose name I have hitherto only mentioned to profane?”

In answer to the pious reasonings of Colonel Leslie, “that it might still be possible for him to obtain the mercy for which he supplicated, if implored in the spirit of unfeigned contrition and reliance on the promises of Heaven to the returning penitent,” he answered impatiently, “I cannot pray! I do not know how to pray! But you are good and virtuous, and those petitions may perhaps be heard

from your lips which mine dare not venture to pronounce."

Colonel Leslie silently motioned Harold to follow his example, who, awe-struck and affected, immediately complied, and kneeling down by the bed-side of his miserable relative, the gallant soldier, in a short but fervent prayer, implored the author of all comfort to visit his distracted mind with peace and consolation. During this interval Berrington laid quiet, and apparently attentive, though his smothered sighs denoted the secret anguish of his soul, and on their rising he several times repeated his thanks for this proof of their commiseration and regard. "And now, Harold," he added, "let me again receive an assurance of your forgiveness.—Do you indeed pardon my past enormities?"

"As truly as I hope mercy for my own offences," he replied, again extending his hand to Berrington, which the latter no

longer rejected, and as he fervently pressed it to his lips, he exclaimed, in a low voice, “*She*, too, forgave me! She told me so herself in that letter she addressed to me in her last moments, exhorting me to repentance and amendment. Oh! had I then attended to the warning voice! Now it is too late.”

The appearance of the surgeon here interrupted the discourse, in whose countenance Berrington seemed desirous of discovering his secret sentiments, and impatiently enquired—“Whether there was no hope?” Mr.—— replied only by intreating him to be composed, and when Colonel Leslie drew him aside, and requested to be informed of his real and undisguised opinion, he shook his head, saying, “It would be cruelty to flatter you with a delusive expectation. No human skill can save Mr. Berrington. The powers of life are receding fast, and

a few hours will in all probability close the scene. I must now leave him for a short time," continued Mr.—, "to pay a few professional visits ; but my absence will not be long. All that can be done in the interim is to keep him as tranquil as possible ; his mind appears to be greatly agitated, and this circumstance will serve, I fear, to accelerate his fate."

Soon after Mr.—'s departure, Berrington suddenly started up, with an enquiry of "Whether his father and other relatives were yet arrived," and on being answered in the negative, he added, in a tone of extreme anguish, "I shall never, then, behold them more—never receive their assurances of pardon for all the grief and disgrace I have occasioned them, nor breathe my last sigh on the tender bosom of my affectionate and neglected mother. Oh how many are there whose accusations for unpardoned

injuries will rise up in terrible judgment against me. Parents whose daughters became the wretched prey of my seductive arts—husbands who owe to me their dishonour and the destruction of their domestic joys—friends ruined in principle and in property by my example and injustice, all plead at once their wrongs, and seize on my departing and affrighted soul to hurl it to perdition.—Now, now they have me !” he continued, while his strained and horror-struck gaze seemed fearfully to pursue some terrific object of visionary existence. “ Leslie—Harold—help me ! Save me from them ! Ah, no, you cannot ! They approach ; they hold me in their grasp ; they drag me with them to the burning gulf, which is yawning to receive me ! I can no longer resist them—and now I sink—sink—for ever ! and with a gush of blood, the effect of agitation, bursting from his wound, Berrington fell back insensible upon his pillow.

Harold could no longer support this scene, and pale, and thrilling with horror, he withdrew into an adjoining apartment, where, in the course of half an hour, he was joined by Colonel Leslie, with intelligence, "That the unhappy victim of licentiousness had just breathed his expiring sigh, in agonies both of mind and body, which admitted not of description, and despairing to the last of that mercy he was conscious of so little deserving.

To have testified any particular demonstration of sorrow for the death of a man he had so much reason to dislike would have been absurd and unnatural in Lord Harold; but he was greatly shocked at the manner of his dissolution, and truly sympathized in the grief expressed by the colonel at his being thus suddenly cut off,

"With all his imperfections on his head,"

and hurried precipitately and unprepared

into the presence of that incensed and omnipotent Judge, whose commands he had violated, and whose laws he had despised.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

FOR some time after the miserable death of the unhappy Berrington no particular occurrence diversified the usual tenor of Harold's existence, which, if not marked by the real or ideal possession of extatic happiness, was blessed with tranquillity and content ; and the tender hopes excited in his mind by the present interesting situation of Lady Emily, imparted the soft colourings of joyful expectation to the prospect of the future. Again did he venture to indulge in visions of imaginary bliss, while anticipating that period when the warm sensibilities of her heart, called forth by a new and delightful claim on her tenderness, would no longer waste themselves upon objects of fanciful and supposititious interest ; and when the important duties, the fond affections of the maternal character,

would leave no room for the indulgence of romantic wishes, whose aim was a felicity too exquisite for the common lot of humanity, and whose attainment included a combination of events and circumstances rarely to be met with in the usual course of affairs.

Since her late initiation into fashionable life, Lady Emily had found occasion for remarking the superior felicity of her own lot when compared to that of many others with whom she was acquainted. She beheld women of the first acquirements, the most amiable dispositions, treated with neglect and unkindness by their husbands, while she experienced herself only an excess of tenderness and indulgence, and her heart elated at the reflection, imputed to an increase of love in Harold, that happiness which she was in fact only now beginning to appreciate; but the demons of hatred and revenge were secretly at work to blight the opening blossoms, and one fatal and deplored

transgression was destined in its consequences to pursue Harold through every stage of his succeeding life, involving not only his own happiness but extending its direful effects to every being whose fate was connected with his own.

About this period the family of the Earl of Temora arrived in town accompanied by Captain Desmond, whose regiment (the 3d guards), after remaining some months at Portsmouth, in the expectation of being embarked for foreign service, had been suddenly remanded back to its usual station in the metropolis. The presence and society of the tender and affectionate Lady Barbara was at this period a great additional comfort to her lovely niece, and the good lady, enchanted at beholding the domestic happiness of her darling Emily, with the best and kindest of husbands, and exulting in the prospect of its augmentation, when the endearing name of mother should be added to that of wife, failed not to repeat

continually to Lady Harold her self-congratulations on her own sagacity, displayed in the assurances she had formerly given her in the course of her apparently hopeless attachment, of one day enjoying her present felicity.

Alas! she little dreamt how short lived that felicity would prove, and that it was destined to experience an interruption from a circumstance which nothing but the most rancorous and inveterate hatred could have converted into a source of misery.

In his frequent visits to the Earl of Temora and Lord Harold, Everard Desmond was often accompanied by a young officer, with whom, from his first entrance into the regiment, he had lived on terms of almost fraternal intimacy and affection. Twice had the fortunate destiny of Fitzalbin enabled him to preserve in the field of battle the life of his friend, whose regard and gratitude had kept pace with the demands upon them, and

continually excited the regret of Everard at his inability to requite the obligation he had received in a manner commensurate to its importance.

One recompense only had appeared to the ardent and romantic Desmond worthy either of Fitzalbin or himself; but this illusion of a warm imagination had been dissipated by a knowledge of Lady Emily's attachment to Harold, and though well aware that many difficulties would have attended the accomplishment of his wishes (for Fitzalbin was only the younger son of a Scotch nobleman of small fortune), he felt nevertheless disappointed and mortified by her union with another. It is true he acknowledged the worth of Harold was sufficient to justify even the fond partiality of Lady Emily; but then Fitzalbin was no less deserving, and besides he was in disposition and character the exact counterpart of herself, with the same romantic sentiments, the same exaggerated ideas

which distinguished his sister. Thoughtless of the consequences which might ensue to the peace of his friend, the charms and virtues of Lady Emily were the constant theme of conversation between Desmond and Fitzalbin, and the latter was already half in love with the creature of his own fancy, when an invitation from Everard to accompany him on a visit to Temora Castle, a few months prior to the decease of the late Earl, first afforded him an introduction to the fair original of his visionary reveries.

High as his expectations had been previously raised by the animated descriptions of her partial brother, Fitzalbin found them infinitely surpassed by Lady Emily herself, and her beauty acquired additional embellishment, from the sweet simplicity of her manners, and that romantic cast of character which so closely coincided with his own. As the most beloved friend of her favourite brother, Fitzalbin was considered by Lady Emily

as entitled to a more than common share of her attention and regard, and two months passed in the society of this lovely and fascinating child of Nature indelibly impressed her image upon Fitzalbin's heart.

Conscious, however, of the obstacles which impeded the gratification of any wish of which Lady Emily was the object, he did not venture to examine too minutely into the nature of his real sentiments; nor did even a hint convey to Desmond an intimation of the fact; a mode of conduct on the part of Fitzalbin, which had its source in the most noble and exalted motives, since to have enforced the claims which gratitude gave him upon Everard, by engaging his assistance in the promotion of an attachment which, he doubted not, would be highly disapproved of by his family, was derogatory to his every principle of honour and delicacy. Influenced by these considerations, Fitzalbin parted from Lady Emily without

breathing a single sentence which could lead her to a knowledge of his secret sentiments, while engrossed solely by one image, the silent language of sighs and looks, which might have betrayed them to another, was totally lost on her.

The intelligence of her marriage at once revealed to Fitzalbin the knowledge of his own heart, and inflicted upon that heart the most acute pang it had ever endured ; but he struggled to overcome it, and when they again met fondly flattered himself that he only beheld in Lady Emily the beloved sister of his friend—the amiable wife of an affectionate and deserving husband, while the innocent and unconscious Emily, entirely devoted to this adored husband, and unsuspecting of the malignant vigilance which was on the watch to give a doubtful interpretation to the most trivial action, treated Fitzalbin as an old and esteemed friend ; and pleased with the congeniality which existed in their tastes and opinions, received

that gratification from his society and conversation, which no secret consciousness of impropriety prevented her from openly expressing.

Yet, upon conduct so natural, so indicative of the guileless simplicity of her heart, did jealousy and hatred found their infamous schemes of blasting the pure blossoms of domestic happiness, ere they had expanded from their state of infant loveliness into full maturity and beauty.

The partiality so innocently expressed for Fitzalbin by Lady Emily, in the undisguised ingenuousness of an unsophisticated nature, was represented to Harold in a manner so artful, so admirably adapted to operate upon his susceptible and somewhat fastidious feelings, that he even laughed at the insinuations which rendered him uneasy. It was their repetition only, accompanied by that nice mixture of irony and commiseration—of seriousness and badinage, which Lady Marchmont so well knew how to assume,

that had the desired effect of impressing them upon his mind, which even still shrunk from acknowledging, though to himself, their malignant influence.

Insensibly he began to fancy that the manners of Lady Emily were less tender than formerly; that she no longer expressed the same appearance of satisfaction in his society, the same pleasure at his attentions. Her cheerfulness too, he perceived, was lately considerably diminished. The pale hue of her cheek was not, he thought, occasioned solely by the little indispositions incident to her present situation, and the tears which frequently swelled her eyes, betrayed to him some concealed source of grief, which he was not admitted to participate.

An alteration in fact *had* taken place in the spirits and manners of Lady Emily, the real cause of which he little suspected originated with himself, and this ignorance fatally served to strengthen his present erroneous and unjust conjectures.

One of those busy and officious tattlers, who are occupied in the affairs of every one more than in their own, had communicated, in confidence, to Lady Emily, those visits, which his anxiety to soothe the half-awakened suspicions of Lord Marchmont of his former criminality, still induced Harold to pay in St. James's-square. Though thrilling with horror and agony at the mere idea of his again being under the destructive and seducing influence of Albina, Lady Emily strenuously resisted the supposition so fatal to her peace. But it was repeated by another *friend*, with circumstances of still greater weight and apparent credibility ; and the adoring wife of Harold began to doubt and tremble. That he was sometimes, alone, from home, for a short period, had ceased to create either surprise or uneasiness ; his connexions, she knew, were extensive—many of them literary and scientific men, whose society would naturally be courted by one of Harold's

rare and acknowledged genius.—Hitherto these temporary separations had only enhanced, in her estimation, those delightful hours, when, secluded from the cares and impertinencies of the world, they mutually resigned themselves to the sweet and tranquil enjoyments of domestic pleasures and pursuits. But a degree of coolness and constraint, the unconscious effects of Albina's artful insinuations, had lately characterized Harold's manners in their private hours of social intercourse ; and Lady Emily, who now imputed it to the newly-regained influence of her dangerous rival, formed the desperate resolution of obtaining such conviction as would confirm or remove her present insupportable state of doubt and apprehension.

No one was in her confidence ; for, to no one would she communicate suspicions so injurious to the character of Harold : and, favoured by the absence of Lady Barbara, who had gone to dine a

few miles out of town, on the first evening, when the former pleaded an engagement, on particular business, as an excuse for leaving her for an hour or two, Lady Emily resolved to execute her design of following him to St. James's-square. Pursuant to the plan already formed, she immediately repaired to the house of a friend, with whom she sometimes spent a leisure evening ; but her visit here was only *en passant* ; and having dismissed the servant who was attending her home, by pretending that her own had received orders to wait for her in a shop, which she entered, to give a more plausible colour to the assertion, Lady Emily proceeded alone, and on foot, to St. James's Square, fearless of molestation or insult ; and every thought, every consideration annihilated, but *one*, and that one of such a nature, that even the consciousness of existence itself seemed absorbed in the reflection.

The obscurity of the night favoured

her project ; and, closely enveloped in a large carriage cloak, which entirely concealed her figure, shivering with cold, and trembling from agitation, Lady Emily continued to pace, with slow and tottering steps, before the house of the Earl of Marchmont, dreading lest, in every stranger that approached, she should behold the object of her fond apprehensions. The length of time which elapsed, had almost inclined her to hope they were unfounded, when she perceived a figure advancing across the square, who appeared to resemble Harold in his walk, and the height of his person. Sinking almost, from the conflict of her feelings, Lady Emily still retained sufficient presence of mind to shun his observation, by hastily gliding down the steps of the adjoining area, where, shadowed by the friendly gloom, she beheld the stranger approach the earl's house ; and a moment afterwards heard him, in the well-known accents of her lord, inquire of

the servant who answered his thundering peal at the door—"If Lady Marchmont was at home?"

He was immediately admitted—and, as if crushed to earth by the voice she had just heard, Lady Emily remained transfixed to the spot where she was standing, the pale image of agony and despair.—She was recalled to recollection by the footsteps of some one approaching the area from within; and, hastily rushing up the steps, she flew across the square, unconscious whither she was going, and only anxious to fly as far as possible from the fatal spot which had confirmed her misery. But strength and breath at length failed her; and, on pausing to recover herself, she perceived she was not in the road to Portman-square, having, in the confusion of intellect which had seized her, on the first confirmation of her fears, taken a wrong turn, which had brought her, she knew not where. Slowly and mechanically she now attempted to

retrace the way she had come, but her recollection was bewildered, and every attempt only served to increase her perplexity. Her appearance, likewise, as she flew, rather than walked along, awakened surprise and curiosity in those she met ; and the rude remark, the familiar address, by exciting alarm, aroused her at length to a more perfect idea of her present situation. Shrinking, in terror, from every one that passed, and fearful of making any inquiry, lest it should subject her to impertinence, Lady Emily continued to pursue her way, in the hope that she should either regain her accustomed limits, or at least reach some street where she might procure a coach to convey her home. But, in both these expectations she was disappointed, and more bewildered the farther she proceeded—fatigue and terror at length deprived her of the power of further exertion. Her trembling limbs were no longer able to sustain her exhausted frame—her head

became giddy, her gaze confused ; and, staggering backwards, she was caught in the arms of a gentleman accidentally passing, while an exclamation of “ Great God ! do I behold Lady Emily Harold ? ” discovered the stranger to be Fitzalbin.

The idea of safety and protection associated with his presence, recalled the fleeting faculties of the terrified and unhappy Lady Emily ; but she was still unable to speak, and, completely exhausted, leaned for support against Fitzalbin, who, after gazing silently for some moments upon her lovely countenance, in which he beheld, by the light of a lamp, near which they stood, the horror and agitation of her mind, exclaimed involuntarily, “ For Heaven’s sake, Lady Emily, what has occurred—where is Lord Harold ? ”

“ Oh, where indeed ! ” she replied, restored by the sound of that beloved name to a full consciousness of all that had just passed ; and tears, the first she had shed

since the terrible conviction of her misfortune, now burst in torrents from her eyes.

Relieved by their indulgence, her composure returned : and, hastily addressing Fitzalbin, who had been a dismayed and silent spectator of her emotion, she faintly articulated—" Mr. Fitzalbin, I believe you to be a man of honour. Will you—oh, will you promise to protect me ?"

" With my life, Lady Emily !" he fervently replied. " Say only in what way I can have the pleasure of serving you ?"

" By seeing me safely home. How far are we, think you, from Portman Square ?"

" About two miles, I should suppose," answered Fitzalbin.

" Indeed ! is it so much ? I fear then, I shall be unable to walk, for I am now fatigued and exhausted. Is it not possible, Mr. Fitzalbin," she continued, " to procure a conveyance ?"

" I think," replied he, " that I remem-

ber seeing a stand of coaches in the next street, if your ladyship can walk so far."

Lady Emily answered, that she would endeavour to make the attempt ; and, supported by Fitzalbin, who led, or rather bore her along, they at length reached the spot he mentioned, where a coach was readily procured, into which he placed his trembling companion, and respectfully seating himself beside her, ordered the man to drive, as fast as possible, to Portman-square.—The silence that ensued was for some time unbroken, and was passed by Lady Emily in reflections upon the propriety of entering into some explanation with Fitzalbin, in whose mind the singular situation in which he had just found her, could not fail of exciting extraordinary, if not unpleasant surmises, the expression of which would be dangerous to her fame. It was true her fond though insulted tenderness revolted at the idea of making him the confidant of Harold's supposed

criminality, but something was likewise due to the character of Harold's wife—something also to the future mother of his innocent child; and, influenced by these considerations, Lady Emily, at length, addressed Fitzalbin:—

“I am aware, Mr. Fitzalbin, of the extraordinary and suspicious appearances attached to the events of this evening, which must have placed the sister of your friend, the wife of Lord Harold, in no very favourable light. I owe to my own character an explanation, which must deeply implicate the conduct of one whose errors, but for this unfortunate discovery, would never have passed my lips. Yes,” she added, vainly endeavouring to suppress her tears, “the heart, whose tenderest feelings have been trampled upon and insulted, is agonized at being thus compelled, in vindication of an apparent impropriety, to accuse the author of its wrongs.”

“Then wherefore, Lady Emily,” re-

plied Fitzalbin, in accents of the softest commiseration, "should you subject it to such a pang? I wish not to inquire into the occasion of an occurrence, which I confess appeared to me extraordinary; but, so high is my opinion of the pure virtue, the unsullied conduct of Lady Emily Harold, that I have no hesitation in believing that the cause, however it originated, is worthy of herself. Let us then drop the subject, and endeavour, I beseech you, to forget that we met this evening."

"No, generous Fitzalbin," replied Lady Emily, with much emotion; "I must not withhold from you that confidence of which you prove yourself so worthy. But not to-night," she added, mournfully, "for I feel myself quite unequal to the painful task. Rely upon my promised explanation when we are alone, and, in the mean time, let me, by every thing most sacred among men, intreat your secrecy on what you have beheld this evening."

Lady Emily received from Fitzalbin his solemn and repeated assurances of obeying her injunctions ; and the latter, after seeing her enter her own house, took his leave, having declined the invitation she gave him to come in. Neither Lady Barbara or Harold were yet returned ; and Lady Emily accounted to her domestics for her appearance under such circumstances, by a sudden indisposition (of which her looks afforded sufficient evidence,) that had seized her while at her friend Mrs. P.'s, who had, unwillingly, permitted her return home in a glass coach, attended by Mr. Fitzalbin, who had happened to call in while she was there.

Alarmed at her lady's appearance, Benson would have sent immediately for medical advice, but Lady Emily, who knew the inefficacy of medicine in a case like her's, prevented her intentions, by assuring her anxious attendant (who had resided with her from her infancy,) that

a few *sal volatile* drops would prove a sufficient remedy ; adding, that she wished to retire immediately to rest.—The drops were accordingly administered by the affectionate Benson, who, having seen her in bed, withdrew, at the request of Lady Emily, the latter pretending an inclination to sleep—but, alas !

“ Macbeth hath murder’d sleep !”

that “ balm of hurt minds,” deigned not to visit the eyes whose tears flowed in torrents over the destruction of that domestic happiness, in which her tender and innocent heart had founded all its hopes of earthly bliss. Harold devoted to a syren—Harold’s affections entirely estranged from herself, was the only object that engrossed her tortured imagination. She could no longer doubt ; for had she not received ocular demonstration that he was in the habit of visiting the woman, whom every sentiment of honour, every prudential consideration,

commanded him to avoid ; and that change of manner, which had been produced by the artful insinuations of the designing Albina, served to confirm Lady Emily in her fatal belief of being an object of even less than indifference to the man in whom was centered all the affections of her own ardent and susceptible soul.

It was late when Lord Harold returned ; who, on hearing that Lady Emily had retired indisposed to her apartment, when she came home from Mrs. P.'s, was hastily repairing thither, but his intention was checked by the information communicated by the unsuspecting Benson, of Mr. Fitzalbin's having been so polite as to escort her ladyship home, " who, poor thing was," she added, " so ill, that he was obliged to carry her in his arms into the house."

The sore mind and irritable feelings of Harold, exasperated by a long *tête-à-tête* visit to Lady Marchmont, who had, as

usual, been infusing the poisons of doubt and suspicion into his too susceptible imagination, beheld, in this simple circumstance, a confirmation of all she had said. It was evident, that the visit of Lady Emily to her friend, was only a pretence to cover an assignation with Fitzalbin, of which his attending her home was a sufficient proof: perhaps her illness also was merely a feint, to afford her an excuse for avoiding his own society; and, hastily taking up a candle, Harold retired to another apartment, coldly desiring Benson to tell her ladyship, "that he was sorry to hear she was unwell, and would not disturb her at that late hour."

This new instance of supposed neglect and indifference from her idolized husband, completed the wretchedness of the unhappy Lady Emily, who passed the long and sleepless night in weeping the loss of that affection, which was now, she feared, irrevocably devoted to the artful and seducing Albina.

CHAP. XXXIX.

For some days Lady Emily continued so much indisposed as to excite serious alarm for the consequences in the minds of her anxious friends ; and Harold, who trembled for the destruction of those hopes, which had now, however, lost much of their sweetness, struggled to subdue his feelings, and assumed an appearance of tenderness which, till lately, had only been expressive of the genuine sentiments of his heart ; but that affection which had placed her in danger, enabled her to contend against the apprehended effects of the shock she had sustained. Lady Emily knew how ardently Harold had wished for a pledge of their union, and believing that on the accomplishment of this wish now rested her last hope of regaining that heart which she erroneously supposed devoted to an-

other, she used every exertion to second the prescriptions of her medical advisers, by whom she was, at the end of a week, pronounced in a convalescent state, to the great joy of her friends, particularly of Lady Barbara, who had literally been in agonies during this period of anxiety and suspense.

But, though returning health once more restored its paler roses to the faded cheek of Lady Emily, it was not in the power of any “sweet oblivious antidote,” to revive again the withered buds of peace and happiness, that had once blossomed in her bosom, now blighted by the chill blast of disappointment and neglect.—Wounded pride, and lingering affection, repressed complaint or reproaches, and led her to conceal in the inmost recesses of her heart the sorrow which consumed it, but its secret influence could be traced in the pensive sadness of her brow—in the mournful and touching tones of her plaintive voice ; and in that general air

of dejection, which pervaded every look and action. To deceive the maternal anxiety of Lady Barbara, she affected to impute this too-evident change to the effect of low spirits, at the prospect of the approaching trial, so alarming to youthful timidity ; and the reasonings and remonstrances of her aunt were, in vain, exerted to cheer and fortify her mind against a period to which, in reality, she looked forward with perfect resignation and serenity ; and secretly implored of Heaven, either to terminate her existence in that eventful hour, or to render it the means of restoring to her the husband, whose estrangement she deplored.

It may be thought extraordinary, perhaps, that Harold's jealousy should have been thus strongly excited towards a woman, for whom he cherished a comparatively feeble affection, but that "green-ey'd monster," whose influence may be totally absorbed in that of an unbounded and reciprocal passion, frequently exerts

an imperious sway over less ardent and animated feelings. Two hearts mutually enamoured and mutually confiding, have no room for the admission of distrust. It is only where the sensibilities are less warm, the affections less devoted, that groundless doubts and mean suspicions arise, the suggestions of a mind conscious of its own deficiencies, and jealous of that tenderness of which it cherishes no firm and unbounded conviction. There is also a jealousy of honour as well as of love, and the man who has committed his to the keeping of any other person will naturally be alive to every circumstance which seems to threaten it with danger.

Here, then, was the point towards which the fears of Harold had been artfully directed, and as it is always in the nature of Vice to create distrust of the conduct of others, his former guilty intimacy with Albina rendered him more liable to be influenced by her present

insinuations. Suspicions, however, founded on no better authority than mere insinuation, would not authorize Harold in any rudeness of behaviour to the friend of Everard Desmond, without assigning such a cause as must lead to explanations he wished at present to avoid ; but there was an appearance of constraint in his manners, a cold and distant politeness, which hurt Fitzalbin, without affording him any pretence for complaint, and to avoid subjecting himself to the unpleasant feelings it created, he became less frequent in his visits, and generally called in Portman Square at those hours when he believed Harold would be from home ; and this circumstance, originating in his own conduct, was construed by the latter into fresh subject of accusation against the innocent and unconscious Emily.

Anxious to vindicate herself in the eyes of a man whom she esteemed, Lady Emily availed herself of the first opportunity to explain to Fitzalbin (under a

promise of inviolable secrecy) the extraordinary situation in which he had beheld her on the eventful evening of her expedition to St. James's Square. The tale she told bore indisputable marks of its veracity. No artificial embellishment to catch the attention—no declamatory sentiment to interest the feelings. It was a simple narration of facts, detailed to justify her own conduct, not to accuse Harold's; and though her tears bore evidence to the anguish of her heart, not a reproach escaped her lips against the cause of her unhappiness. It may easily be conceived what emotions were excited by this relation in the susceptible mind and vivid imagination of the young Fitzalbin. The sympathetic drops that filled his eyes responded to those which bedewed the cheek of the fair narrator, and he could with difficulty restrain those expressions of indignation against Harold, which he perceived, by the manner of his wife, would have been ill received.

Hitherto Fitzalbin had believed, that, in relinquishing the dream of bliss which had once charmed his youthful fancy, he had relinquished also the sentiment which had inspired it; but in his heart love slumbered only, and the embers of a half extinguished affection were again revived by existing circumstances, under the delusive, but not less dangerous form of sympathy and friendship. Lady Emily, unhappy Lady Emily! devoted to a man apparently unworthy of, and insensible to her tenderness, and who appeared to spurn from him with cold indifference that happiness he would himself have almost died to have obtained, awakened a sentiment of such tender pity in the bosom of Fitzalbin as would of itself have been sufficient to render her an object of dangerous interest, without the aid of a former and still unsubdued attachment; and it was now only Harold had reason for uneasiness at the peril to which his own credulity and infatuation had expos-

ed two beings, whose romantic and sentimental characters, might lead them to the very verge of misery and ruin, ere they were themselves aware of their situation.

Insensibly did the society of Lady Emily begin to constitute the chief pleasure and happiness of Fitzalbin. It was so soothing to his feelings to possess her confidence—to be the only person in whom she reposed the secret sorrows of her guileless heart, that he had not resolution to forego the dangerous indulgence, and with the purest intentions, the highest sense of virtue, he was daily and hourly nourishing feelings, whose fatal tendency he never allowed himself to investigate.

Lady Emily on her side unconsciously cherished these sentiments by a conduct which was purely the result of her own singular and peculiar situation. Chance had discovered to Fitzalbin a secret the most momentous and interesting to

her heart, and withheld by affection to Harold from conversing with any other being on the subject of her sorrows, how could she refrain from imparting them to him whose destiny had made him their participator, and of whose concern and sympathy she could not entertain a doubt?

Here, then, was the source of that appearance of secret intelligence, that mutual interest and regard between Lady Emily and Fitzalbin, which the jealous suspicions of Harold converted into proofs of a reciprocal passion, whose supposed progress he beheld with a heart torn by grief and indignation. It was now only that he became truly sensible of the real colour of his own criminal conduct in regard to Lady Marchmont. Though less deserving, Albina had been even more beloved by her husband, than the pure and virtuous Emily, and though the knowledge he had since obtained of her character would no longer permit him

to regard himself as the seducer of Lady Marchmont, Harold was conscious that he could not plead that circumstance of involuntary innocence in extenuation of his subsequent guilt. "It is right, very right!" he would bitterly exclaim (when reflection suggested these painful and humiliating remembrances)—"that my crime should be thus punished; yet oh! Emily! it is too much to behold in thee the instrument of my chastisement!—Thee, towards whom I cannot reproach myself with a single action to palliate thy baseness and ingratitude!"

In proportion as his mind became infected with the belief of her infidelity, the neglect and coldness of Harold to Lady Emily increased. Miserable, when at home, he flew for relief from domestic wretchedness to scenes of gaiety, or the society of his treacherous pretended friend, who industriously augmented his perception of that ideal misery she had herself created. His dissipated habits,

his supposed infatuation, were soon generally spoken of, and condemned; and rumour became at length so loud, as to reach the ears of Lord Temora, who was only withheld from openly expressing his indignation by a dread of the consequences, which a rupture between him and her husband might produce at this period to Lady Emily. Desmond, too, who, (notwithstanding his real and imaginary faults) was sincerely attached to Lord Harold, endeavoured to soften matters with his brother, and represented “that it was, perhaps, merely the inventions of calumny they had heard. That their sister he well knew had never breathed a complaint of Harold to any human being; and that ere they so publicly espoused her cause it would be but justice to be assured that she had been injured.”

“Desmond! Desmond!” exclaimed the impetuous Temora, “I see you are too confident; too much fascinated with

this specious profligate (excuse the term), to give credit to any thing alledged against him. But, though Emily, I fear, has been his dupe, I wish not to accelerate the moment which confirms her wretchedness. Let her, however, only give birth to the pledge of an ill-starred union, and Harold shall then find that the House of Desmond is not to be insulted with impunity."

With this resolution Lord Temora remained satisfied for the present; but from that period he relinquished his former intimacy and connection with Harold, who, absorbed in his own miserable feelings, scarcely remarked the change, which would have affected him more sensibly in Desmond, than in his brother, whose stern virtue and unbending manners had early created in the mind of his young relative a degree of repugnance which had prevented any intimacy between them beyond that of a mere friendly politeness.

Such were the consequences already produced in the family and connections of Lord Harold, by the direful influence of that being who was fated to be the bane of his existence. But all the arts, all the allurements of Albina were in vain exerted to renew that fatal and criminal infatuation which had been the only dark shade in the character of her unfortunate victim. The claims of a wife whose fidelity he doubted might, perhaps, have proved too feeble a defence against the wiles of an enchantress; but the form of Gabrielle, as he had beheld her in that solemn moment when she called on Heaven to attest and confirm the vow he had just taken, continually interposed itself to all the arts of Lady Marchmont, and stigmatized by the world and condemned by his friends, in this instance, however, Harold deserved not their censure; where, if he did not procure the applause, he maintained at least the conflict of virtue. To the image of

Gabrielle, perhaps, this victory might be chiefly imputed, and deprived of every other comfort, sullied in fame and blasted in happiness, dishonoured (as he suspected) by the woman towards whom his conduct had been marked only by tenderness and indulgence, Harold found in the lonely contemplation of this dear and cherished image, a sad yet soothing pleasure, which alone enabled him to support the bitterness of his present feelings : and frequently might he have exclaimed, in the pathetic strains of the poet,

“ Oh ! I have hung so long at night
O'er thy still semblance, charm'd from pain,
That I have thought the living light
Came beaming from those eyes again.”

But the crisis of his fate was fast approaching, and friendship, which, perhaps, might have averted the destined stroke, was suffered to remain in ignorance of the events which produced it ; for to Colonel Leslie, highly as he esteemed

him, Harold could not summon sufficient resolution to speak of his supposed disgrace. One intimation of his suspicions to that estimable friend—one reproachful word addressed to Lady Emily, would have led to such explanations as must have disconcerted all the finely spun schemes of the treacherous Albina, and have restored peace and confidence to two hearts so worthy of possessing them. But the emotions of a proud, indignant spirit, scorning complaint, yet shrinking from dishonour, the insulted feelings of a susceptible heart, stung by ingratitude and deceit, impelled Harold to preserve an inviolable silence on the disgraceful theme; and sullenly brooding over imaginary wrongs, whose existence he wanted sufficient proof to establish, the change produced in his temper and manners by the irritating contemplation, was a source of surprise and regret to his friends, and was imputed, by the sorrowful Lady Emily, to the influence of a rival,

who, jealous of her prerogative, cruelly wished to deprive her of even that outward show of tenderness and attention which might have enabled her to sustain with greater fortitude and resignation the bitter pangs of despised and neglected affection.

CHAP. XL.

FITZALBIN in the mean time drooped and desponded beneath the influence of a sentiment, which every day assumed a more imperious ascendancy over his soul, and, no longer able to conceal from himself the nature of those sensations, which a heart anxious to disguise its weakness, had, with a subtle casuistry, endeavoured to impute to the influence of friendship alone, he plainly perceived, notwithstanding the flimsy veil they borrowed from the idea of a sentimental and innocent attachment, that the only prospect before him was an alternative of guilt or misery.

Had Lady Emily still been, as he once supposed her, the beloved and happy wife of Lord Harold, Fitzalbin would have found in the conviction of her felicity an alleviation to the bitterness of his own

disappointed affections ; but to behold her miserable and neglected, to whose happiness he would have regarded the devotion of a whole life too poor a sacrifice, was a trial which exceeded in its severity every thing of suffering he had yet known ; and Fitzalbin, in his present situation, sustained a continual conflict with himself, a thousand times more painful than the pangs he would have endured in flying for ever from the fair unconscious occasion of his wretchedness. To be in the almost daily contemplation of charms, which only served to augment his passion, to hear from the loveliest lips in nature the expression of feelings and opinions so entirely congenial to his own, and to live on terms of such intimacy and friendship with the object of a concealed attachment, increased at once the fervency of passion and the bitterness of despair, and imposed a struggle upon his feelings which he was utterly unequal to sustain.

His spirits drooped, his health declined, and, languid and attenuated, he soon appeared only like the shadow of his former self, to the infinite surprise and uneasiness of his friend Desmond, and the no slight regret of Lady Emily, who mutually questioned him, in vain, on the occasion of this melancholy alteration. Sometimes, indeed, in the impatience of hopeless suffering, Fitzalbin would, for a moment, believe that the knowledge and participation of the former in his secret sentiments, would allay the poignancy of the pangs inflicted by their concealment. "But no," he would mentally add, "it would afford me no consolation to behold her the alternate prey of an unauthorized passion, and the victim of a cheerless despair. Oh, no! sweetest Lady Emily, never shall thy tranquillity be disturbed by me. My death will soon, I trust, expiate my involuntary crime; and even the most rigid virtue cannot condemn

the tear which friendship sheds to the memory of Fitzalbin."

From this dream of delusion and madness, in which he was now plunged, an order from the Commander in Chief for a part of the regiment to be embarked immediately for the East Indies fell like a stroke of thunder upon the senses of Fitzalbin. Some domestic affairs requiring his presence in Scotland, previous to his departure for a foreign clime, he was consequently obliged to leave London at a few hours notice, scarcely allowing him sufficient time for a hasty farewell of the few friends whom he regretted to leave in the metropolis.

Of these, Lady Emily claimed the first place ; but, conscious how much he should be affected by the parting interview, Fitzalbin deferred this visit till the last, and it was evening before he proceeded to Portman-square.

He found Lady Emily unusually dejected, and the information he gave her of

his intended departure did not serve to cheer her spirits, for habit had rendered his society an acquisition not to be relinquished without regret. Lady Barbara, who was extremely partial to him, was eloquent in her expressions of sorrow ; and Fitzalbin, who was almost too much oppressed to speak, sat the pale image of despair. The former was, at length, compelled to fulfil an engagement for the evening, and he was rising to depart, when her ladyship requested he would stay with her niece till the arrival of Everard Desmond, who had promised to remain with his sister during her absence. Fitzalbin bowed his compliance ; and, after seeing Lady Barbara to her carriage, and promising to call early the following morning in Portman-square, he returned to the apartment where he had left Lady Emily. In vain did the latter endeavour to lead her companion to converse on some topic of general discourse. Engrossed solely by the idea of a long,

perhaps an eternal farewell, Fitzalbin had no thoughts, no language for any other subject ; and, distressed and uneasy at beholding his excessive dejection, Lady Emily, in the hope of giving a turn less really painful to his oppressed feelings, approached her harp, and, seating herself beside it, began to play several of his favourite airs. Fitzalbin listened in silence ; but, on her ladyship calling upon him to join her in a duet, he made an effort to recall his absorbed faculties, and, advancing to the music desk, carelessly turned over the leaves of a book which laid open upon it, with that air of abstraction which indicates that the mind has no share in the outward actions.

He was aroused by the voice of Lady Emily inquiring “ What they should sing ? ” and, starting, as if from a dream, he unconsciously pointed to a page of the volume then opened before her, which contained her favourite Irish melodies.— That to which he now directed her atten-

tion may be esteemed one of the most beautiful and unexceptionable in the collection, and the voice of Lady Emily never sounded to such advantage as when with the simplicity of true taste, and the enthusiasm of national feeling, she sang the sweet and plaintive “strains of Erin ;” but the words of “When he who adores thee,” were too applicable to the present situation of Fitzalbin, not to create the most violent emotion in the bosom of that unhappy victim of despairing passion. In vain he endeavoured to subdue his feelings—in vain attempted to sing ; and his tremulous agitation, his extreme paleness, at length attracted the attention of Lady Emily, who suddenly ceased playing, while she inquired, in a tone indicative of her concern, “whether he was unwell ?” Fitzalbin replied not ; but, as he drooped his head against the music desk, the tears he sought to conceal caught her view, and, surprised and distressed, she hastily exclaimed, “Good

Heaven, Fitzalbin, you are weeping! Tell me, I conjure you, by our past friendship, the cause of that excessive depression I have remarked this evening. It cannot surely arise solely from the prospect of your approaching departure."

What a moment was this to Fitzalbin! thus solicited to communicate the occasion of his unhappiness to her in whom it had originated. One word would place his secret in the possession of Lady Emily—but honour, virtue, even love itself, forbade that word to be pronounced. Their victory was decisive, in a heart which, though weak, was not guilty; and, on her ladyship again renewing her former inquiry—"Forgive me, my amiable, my lovely friend," he replied, in faint but determined accents, "if I now appear ungrateful and insensible to these kind and touching expressions of your concern and friendship. Could you read my heart—but no, I must not, dare not. Oh, Lady Emily, for my sake, for your

own, ask no further explanations. It is sufficient that I am and must be miserable ; but you, at least, may be happy." And, as he spoke, Fitzalbin, unconsciously, clasped in his own cold and trembling hand the one which he had taken. The whole truth seemed now to burst, like a flash of lightning, on the bewildered senses of Lady Emily. Every thing she had seen and heard in this eventful evening served to confirm the distressing conviction, of having herself been the innocent destroyer of Fitzalbin's peace ; but, though shocked and confounded at this discovery, Lady Emily had sufficient self-command to conceal from the latter the suspicions thus unexpectedly confirmed. Secure in conscious virtue, and believing, by his manner, that Fitzalbin had no intention of addressing her in a language to which her situation would not allow her to listen, she affected a composure she did not really feel, and endeavoured to turn their discourse on

the subject of his future prospects, and the country he expected to visit, momentarily hoping that the arrival of Desmond would release her from her present state of embarrassment and distress. But Desmond came not ; and Fitzalbin, who had already deferred the dreaded moment of his departure to as late an hour as decorum allowed, and who perceived notwithstanding her attempts to disguise it, the evident uneasiness of Lady Emily, at length made a desperate effort, and arose to go. The soft heart of the gentle Emily bled, at beholding the anguish she had innocently occasioned ; and, as Fitzalbin, the paleness of death upon his visage, approached to take his leave, her spirits forsook her, and extending her hand, she burst into tears.

At this sight, the eyes of Fitzalbin, which before expressed only the wildness of despair, assumed a softer aspect, and as he pressed it to his lips, “oh, Lady Emily,” he exclaimed, “those tears declare

that you pity, that you will regret your unhappy friend. Be composed," he added, observing she trembled so much as to be obliged to resume her seat, "I know my duty, and will not shrink from its performance; I only ask so much of your remembrance as is consistent with your own, and that when you hear the tidings of my death, you will vouchsafe a tear to my memory."

"Talk not of death, Fitzalbin, I beseech you," replied Lady Emily, much affected, "You will live I trust to enjoy many happy years in your native land. To meet again," she added, in a lower voice, "the friend you now part with, under brighter and more cheering auspices than the present."

"Never, Lady Emily," answered Fitzalbin, with an air of touching solemnity. "I feel a secret and overwhelming conviction that this will prove an eternal farewell. It is better, perhaps, that it should be so. I have already lived too long for my own happiness. Let me at

least die before I have to reproach myself with disturbing that of another. But I distress you," he added, beholding tears again streaming down her lovely cheek, "and to prolong torture is not to lessen the sense of suffering. Yet ere I went, I would if I dare presume so far, solicit one indulgence."

"Name it, Fitzalbin," replied Lady Emily, "since I am convinced you will ask nothing that the wife of Lord Harold should deny."

"I would entreat you then," said Fitzalbin, at the same time placing in her hand a small case, "to accept this as a last pledge of pure and fervent friendship. Nay, do not hesitate Lady Emily, it is a token of remembrance, which the beloved sister of Everard Desmond need not refuse to receive from his friend."

Lady Emily at the request of Fitzalbin opened the case, which she found to contain a mourning ring set in hair, on

which was engraved his own name, with blanks left for the dates of his death and age. With an involuntary shudder she dropped it on the floor, exclaiming, "Good Heavens, Fitzalbin, what means this fatal gift?"

"It is the only one," he answered, "which I could presume to offer Lady Emily Harold, or that she could deign to accept," and stooping down, Fitzalbin took up the ring, and placed it on the hand of Lady Emily, when in so doing, the pledge of wedded faith, which she had received from Harold, dropped from her finger upon the ground. Though purely accidental, there was something in this circumstance so singular, that it was regarded as ominous by Lady Emily, whose mind was too enthusiastic to be entirely free from the influence of superstition, and nothing but an unwillingness to wound the feelings of Fitzalbin, prevented her from immediately returning the occasion of the accident.

For a moment the latter retained the hand he had taken, and as he relinquished it, with a sigh which seemed to rend his heart, "Farewell! Lady Emily!" he exclaimed, "dear and lovely friend, farewell, for ever! Father of goodness!" he added, involuntarily sinking on one knee, "shower down thy choicest blessings on this angel's head. Touch the heart of him to whom her destiny is united, that he may be sensible of the inestimable happiness he enjoys, and may her's continue to increase long after I am laid in the grave."

Deeply affected, Lady Emily could only look the farewell she had not power to articulate, and as Fitzalbin quitted the apartment, she hastily retreated to her own room, where, secure from all interruption, she gave a free indulgence to those tears which were excited by the destiny of an amiable young man, whose peace she had innocently destroyed, and for whose restoration to happiness, her

gentle and guileless heart offered up the most fervent petitions to the fountain of all good.

Fitzalbin in the mean time pursued his way through the streets, scarcely conscious whither he was going. The night was dark and stormy, and the cheerless aspect of every surrounding object accorded with his own desponding feelings, as, absorbed in melancholy meditation, he slowly walked along towards that home which he never again desired to reach. In passing through St. James's Square, he beheld a gentleman coming out of a house, whom he immediately recognized for Lord Harold, returning from an evening visit to Lady Marchmont. The sight of a man he secretly detested, for his supposed profligacy, and his neglect of the woman in whom was centered every tender feeling of his own heart, was calculated at this moment to awaken the most bitter sensations of hatred and indignation in the mind of Fitzalbin, at beholding this public

testimony of Harold's disregard of that happiness he would himself have gladly purchased at the price even of existence. But he had not time for longer reflection ; for as they passed, the recognition became mutual, and hastily turning back, Harold exclaimed, " We are well met, Mr. Fitzalbin. This unexpected rencontre will supersede the necessity of my seeking you elsewhere."

" For what purpose, my lord ?" enquired Fitzalbin, much surprised.

" To demand satisfaction for the injury you have done me," exclaimed Harold, in a voice of thunder. " Nay, no prevarication, Sir ;" he continued, perceiving Fitzalbin was about to speak, " the evidence of your guilt admits not of a doubt, and either prepare to meet me on the terms I mention, or expect to be branded in future as a contemptible coward, as well as an infamous seducer."

" I scorn your lordship's imputations," replied Fitzalbin, his cheek glowing with resentful emotion. " Name your place,

and you shall find me punctual ; but your proceedings must be speedy, for I leave town to-morrow at noon. My regiment is under foreign orders, and I shall not return here again."

The spot was accordingly appointed, and these two fiery and indignant spirits separated, burning with jealousy and resentment, at imaginary wrongs, which they mutually panted to revenge ; Harold his own, Fitzalbin those of Lady Emily.

To account for a circumstance which may, perhaps, appear as extraordinary to our readers, as it now did to Fitzalbin, we shall proceed to state that Harold had recently left an evening party where he unfortunately met Mrs. P., the friend, on whom Lady Emily had called on the eventful night of her expedition to St. James's Square.

In the course of conversation, an accidental remark from this lady betrayed to Harold the circumstances under which she had then quitted her house, not as he

had been previously informed in the protection of Fitzalbin, but alone, and declining, under a false pretence, the offer of a servant to accompany her. Yet the former had attended her home, and every incident seemed the result of art and contrivance, the most consummate and premeditated, on the part of Lady Emily to cover an assignation with her seducer.

Though shrinking in dismay and agony from the horrible conviction which thrilled his senses, Harold had sufficient presence of mind to conceal the expression of his emotions from the observation of Mrs. P., but he found it impossible in the present state of his feelings to continue any longer in the scene of gaiety, and under a plea of indisposition, retired abruptly from the party where they had so unfortunately met, and scarcely conscious what he did, mechanically took the way to St. James's Square. He found Lady Marchmont at home, and alone, who, on beholding his disordered looks and burn-

ing cheek, immediately conjectured that something unusual had occurred to create such an uncommon degree of agitation, and her artful interrogatories at length drew from Harold an unreserved disclosure of the evening's adventure.

With difficulty could the wily Albina conceal her secret joy at a circumstance which, however originating, promised essentially to promote her invidious designs against the happiness of her innocent rival.

The purity of Lady Emily's fame had never, she well knew, been sullied even by a whisper ; but she believed it more than possible that the fair neglected wife of a husband, whom her arts had alienated, might become the prey of some artful and designing libertine, who knew how to convert this circumstance to his own advantage, and her heart expanded to the reception of those hopes and prospects which Harold's marriage had annihilated, but which might still be re-

alized could Lady Emily be found as culpable as she fervently trusted she would prove. To augment the suspicions and resentment of Harold was her present aim, and the result of her artful insinuations has been already seen in the accidental rencontre between the former and his supposed rival.

On arriving at home Harold found the family already retired, and, after dispatching a few lines to Colonel Leslie, requesting his attendance the following morning, he repaired to his apartment—not to rest, that was out of the question, but to make some necessary arrangements previous to the expected meeting. Lady Emily had long since been enjoying the calm repose of innocence and virtue, and as Harold entered her chamber an involuntary impulse made him pause, and softly approaching the bed, he drew aside the curtain, and remained for some moments silently contemplating the form before him.

The drowsy power had closed her blue and melting orbs in peaceful slumber; but an unusual glow sat on her moistened cheek, and a broken sigh heaved at intervals the snowy cambric which shaded her lovely bosom. It was soon, however, succeeded by a smile, and she looked so beautiful, so innocent, her charming countenance was so expressive of the feelings of a pure and virtuous mind, that as he gazed, Harold was staggered in his belief of her infidelity. "No, no, it cannot be!" he mentally exclaimed "that deceit and treachery should lurk beneath a form so lovely. Where must we look for virtue if it is not here, where every feature seems stamped with the impression of its noblest attributes."

At this moment, Lady Emily accidentally putting one of her hands out of bed, the attention of Harold was attracted by the ring presented to her that evening by Fitzalbin, which, in the hurry of her spirits, she had forgotten to take off pre-

vious to her going to rest ; and as a sudden impulse of curiosity prompted him to examine it, the name of Fitzalbin engraved upon the margin, at once disclosed to him the donor, while at the same instant the sound of that detested name caught his ear, as it trembled in low and murmured tones from the lips of Lady Emily.

Harold groaned and shuddered at a circumstance which seemed to confirm all his fears ; since wherefore should the name of Fitzalbin be pronounced by Lady Emily in her sleep, if his image when waking did not possess her heart ? “ Oh, yes, she is, she must be guilty ; ” and flinging away the hand he had taken, with so much violence as to awaken the unconscious sleeper, Harold precepitately rushed from the apartment, to which he did not again return, and proceeding to the library, locked himself in, and passed the rest of the night in making such

arrangements as the possibility of his not surviving the morning's rencontre now first suggested to his mind. They were of such a nature as might be expected from his present perturbed and embittered state of feeling, and the charge of executing his wishes was committed to Colonel Leslie, to whom he briefly communicated all that had passed, and who, together with the Earl of Temora and Everard Desmond, he nominated guardians to his child, with strict injunctions to remove it as soon as possible from the care of its mother. This done, Harold wrote a few letters to several friends, which, with that intended for the colonel, he secured in his scrutoire, and having prepared his pistols, and made a slight alteration in his dress, he flung himself upon a sofa, and endeavoured to obtain a short repose to recruit his harassed spirits and exhausted frame, before he entered upon a scene, the event of

which was uncertain, and might probably be attended with fatal, or at least serious, consequences to one of the parties concerned.

CHAP. XLI.

WITH the first dawn of morning Lord Harold quitted the house, and proceeded to Colonel Leslie's, whom he found already up and waiting his arrival, while, with an air of anxiety, he exclaimed—"Good Heavens! my lord—what affair is this in which you are now engaged?—Was there no possibility of accommodating matters without proceeding to such extremities?"

"None! none on earth, colonel. The injury I have sustained admits of no other expiation."

"And may I ask who is your antagonist?"

"Mr. Fitzalbin."

"Fitzalbin!" repeated the colonel, "so intimate with your family—so partially regarded by Captain Desmond.—What

cause for dissension can possibly exist between him and you?"

"My dear colonel," replied Harold, "you must excuse me from entering into any explanations at this time. If I survive our meeting I will make you the confidant of my present distressing situation. If I fall, I have left letters which will explain every thing. Let us now drop the subject, and repair to the place appointed; I do not wish Fitzalbin to arrive before me."

Early, however, as it was, they found him already there, and his pale and haggard looks—the extreme dejection evident in his whole appearance, would have excited the commiseration even of Lord Harold, could he have divested himself of those feelings which were inspired by the idea of his imaginary wrongs. In answer to Colonel Leslie's enquiry of why he came alone? Fitzalbin replied—"Because the only man whose presence I

should choose to request on such an occasion is too nearly connected with my opponent to permit of my doing so. I had some other reasons, but they are immaterial. It is sufficient that I rely implicitly on the honour and humanity of Colonel Leslie."

"I trust, Mr. Fitzalbin," answered the colonel, "that you will have no cause to alter your present favourable opinion. Permit me, however, once more to ask whether this affair between yourself and Lord Harold will not admit of an amicable arrangement?"

Both replied in the negative, and having taken their ground, Fitzalbin addressed Harold—"The laws of honour, my lord, entitle me, on this occasion, to the privilege of the first fire; but I wish not to avail myself of the advantage thus given me, and propose with the approbation of Colonel Leslie to decide it by lot."

"No, sir," replied Harold, resolved not to be outdone in generosity by his

rival, "I cannot allow of such an infringement on the usual custom. Either take the first shot yourself, or let us both fire together."

Fitzalbin agreed to the latter proposal, and immediately fell.

Though burning with rage and vengeance against the author of his supposed dishonour, the heart of Harold had not lost its naturally humane and generous feelings. His resentment subsided at the sight of a fallen enemy, and, as he assisted Colonel Leslie in raising Fitzalbin from the ground, he eagerly demanded "whether he was much wounded?"

"Sufficiently, I trust," he answered in a faint voice, "to terminate your anxieties and my own; and now, my lord, since you can no longer impute such a declaration to a cowardly desire of shunning its consequences, hear me solemnly swear, on the faith of a dying man, that your resentment against me was un-

founded. I have never wronged you even in thought ; nor are angels themselves purer than the object of your unjust suspicions. This letter," he continued, making an effort to draw one from his pocket, "will afford you a further explanation. What has passed I readily forgive. It is my wish to die, though I did not deserve to meet death from your hands ; but I believe you have been led into an error, and can, therefore, pardon you."—And as he ceased speaking, Fitzalbin endeavoured to extend his hand to Harold in token of his forgiveness and reconciliation ; but nature was exhausted from the loss of blood, and he fainted away.

"Great Heaven !" exclaimed Harold, as he committed to his bosom the letter he had received—"If this is true, then what am I?—Is he dead?" added he, in a tone of anguish, addressing himself to Colonel Leslie, who was attempting to

bind up Fitzalbin's wound in order to stop the further effusion of blood.

"I trust not ; but immediate assistance must be procured to save him.—Hasten, therefore, I beseech you, for a surgeon ; but do not return here yourself. Fitzalbin's friends are noble, and it would be advisable for you to withdraw yourself a little, till we see how the affair will terminate."

"And will you let me know the result?"

"Certainly, if you will inform me where you may be found?"

Harold wrote down an address, which he presented to Colonel Leslie, and hastily snatching another glance at the inanimate form of Fitzalbin silently withdrew from the fatal spot. His first care was to send the requisite assistance to his unhappy opponent, and on arriving at the place he had chosen for his present retreat, he proceeded to examine the letter which the latter had given him. This

epistle, which was destined to wring his heart with acute anguish, contained a brief, yet affecting statement of every particular which had led to the present catastrophe. Fitzalbin spoke without reserve of his feelings, his struggles, and the conquest he had obtained over them, and the contrast his conduct presented to certain humiliating remembrances in the memory of Harold, overwhelmed the latter with shame and self-accusation. Of Lady Emily he said no more than was sufficient to exonerate her from even a suspicion of impropriety; and as it was necessary, in order for her complete vindication, to relate the circumstance which had occasioned that appearance of mutual intelligence that had excited the jealousy of her husband, the heart of Harold received another stab from the knowledge of the sorrow so long sustained by Lady Emily at the idea of his supposed infidelity. Yet had she never complained—never reproached him, while he had not

only secretly accused her of a crime of which she was guiltless, but augmented, by repeated proofs of neglect and indifference, the anguish she had endured with the silent fortitude of patient and submissive virtue. In this letter every thing was explained even to the ring which had served to confirm his unjust suspicions, which Fitzalbin candidly avowed he had presented to her as a last token of remembrance from one whom it was his firm resolution she should never behold again, and he concluded by conjuring him to lose no time in restoring peace and happiness to the bosom of the wife who adored him, by dissolving a connection, which threatened equal ruin to his fame, his honour, and his felicity.

Again and again did Harold peruse this epistle, and every fresh perusal increased the bitterness of self-reproach.—“This, then,” he mentally exclaimed, “is the woman I have suspected—the man I have, perhaps, destroyed. Surely

some direful fatality hangs over me, which is communicated to every one whose destiny is connected with mine. Yet I will acquit Fate of her worst malice if she spares but the life of Fitzalbin."

His first impulse was to have flown immediately to Lady Emily, to have acknowledged his injustice, and implored her pity and forgiveness; but shame prevented the execution of a design which might still have obviated the consequences of his past folly. He blushed to confess how greatly he had wronged her, and that too, at the instigation of the being who, of all others, might have been supposed most likely to calumniate the wife of Lord Harold. In the mind of the latter, indignation against Albina, as the primary occasion of his error, now claimed an equal share with his own self-reproaches; and, shrinking from the solitary endurance of his present insupportable feelings, he repaired to St. James's

Square at as early an hour as he believed her ladyship would be visible, and was immediately admitted to her boudoir.—The intelligence of the duel had already reached Albina, and to this circumstance she imputed the gloom which lowered upon the brow of Harold, as he entered the apartment, but she was soon undeceived, when, coldly rejecting her offered hand, he flung himself into a seat in the most distant part of the room ; while, with a voice half suffocated by passion, he bitterly reproached her for the part she had been acting. Lady Marchmont listened, in silence, to these expressions of his resentment, and when he ceased speaking, with an air of the most perfect *sang froid*, she coolly desired him to be composed ; adding—“ Your lordship has no reason to reproach me for merely giving utterance to the reports of others. And how are they now contradicted ? By the assertions of a dying man, who seeks to avert from the participator of his guilt that

vengeance whose effects he has himself experienced. It is astonishing to me how you can thus easily become the dupe of these designing arts."

Harold groaned, in the bitterness of his soul. "Oh, when," he exclaimed, "will my miseries terminate? On every side I see myself surrounded by doubt and deception, and know not in whom I ought to confide. Yet, asseverations so solemn, explanations so apparently satisfactory, cannot surely be intended only to deceive. Oh, Albina, instruct me, I beseech you, in what manner I may be released from this distracting state of doubt and apprehension?"

"For what purpose should I do so, since it only serves to draw on me the expression of your resentment? You woo the delusion which imposes upon you, and treat with contumely and contempt the friend who wishes to open your eyes."

"Forgive me, Lady Marchmont," re-

plied Harold, "I am scarcely conscious of what I do, and my bewildered faculties refuse their assistance in extricating me from the labyrinth in which I am at present involved. Grant me your advice, for I confess myself at a loss how to proceed."

"It is difficult to determine," answered Lady Marchmont, "since the death of Mr. Fitzalbin."

"Is he then dead!" exclaimed Harold, in a tone of extreme emotion.

"It is generally understood so," answered Albina: "and also that the severest measures may be expected to be pursued by his friends against the man who killed him. At present, therefore, it is indispensably necessary that you should remain *incog.* till the affair is a little blown over. Tell me where you now are."

Harold informed her—when, shaking her head, Lady Marchmont replied—"That will never do, Harold. A public

hotel is the worst retreat you could possibly have chosen. I will point out a much better. You know La Commode's ?”

“ I do.”

“ Well, then ; a line from me will ensure you a concealment in her house, for as long a time as you think proper ; and, in the evening, I will come and concert with you on the best measures to be pursued.”

“ But I am in momentary expectation,” replied Harold, “ of hearing from Col. Leslie, who has my present address.”

“ He can tell you no more than you know already—that Fitzalbin is dead ; and wherefore should you incur any hazard of a discovery for the sake of such intelligence. But, to quiet your uneasiness, I will send directions to ——’s, to forward here any letters that may arrive, and will bring them to you myself this evening.”

Harold was at length persuaded ; and,

after some further conversation, which only served to increase his present state of doubt and perplexity, he proceeded to Madame La Commode's, by whom, in consequence of Lady Marchmont's recommendation, he was received with the utmost deference and obsequiousness, and immediately put in possession of the splendid apartments which were kept by Madame for the *accommodation of her friends*.

Here, destitute of society, and with a mind too much perturbed to admit of any employment, Harold passed the weary hours in reflecting upon the late occurrences, and every retrospection only augmented his uneasiness. All the subtle reasonings of Lady Marchmont had not been able to destroy the impression produced upon his mind, by Fitzalbin's letter: and, as in the solitude of his apartment, he once more read the evidence of his innocence, again was he staggered in his belief of those assertions

which had been produced by the former, in confirmation of his guilt, and the idea of his death excited an involuntary shudder. In this conflict of sentiment and feeling was spent the longest day he had ever known: and, weary of a solitude which his present situation rendered insupportable, he gladly hailed the sound of the carriage which announced the arrival of Lady Marchmont, who entered soon afterwards, with a smiling air; while Harold, as she approached him, involuntarily exclaimed—"Thank Heaven, Albina! you are at length come. Never, in the whole course of my life, was I so tired of my own society."

"I am truly grieved, my dear Harold, that it was not in my power to come before; but I have had so many impertinents, so many interruptions, that I could not disengage myself a moment sooner."

"And what intelligence do you now bring me?"

"None of consequence, except that

Fitzalbin is certainly dead. The affair is talked of every where, and every one makes their own comments."

In answer to his inquiry of—whether she had brought him any letters? Lady Marchmont answered in the negative; and Harold could not refrain from secretly accusing Colonel Leslie of neglect and unkindness, in permitting him to remain so long in his present state of incertitude and suspense, without any attempt on his part to alleviate them.

From the report of Lady Marchmont, it appeared evident to Harold, that a temporary retirement would be requisite, to avoid the unpleasant consequences which might ensue from the late affair; and the only point to be decided was "where he was to go?"

Albina, at length, ventured to propose a trip to the continent as the most eligible plan; adding, "should you approve of this proposal, I have no doubt of prevailing on my lord to consent to a little tour,

and you can join our party at any place you choose."

Harold was startled at this proposition, and represented to her ladyship that such a scheme, as the one she mentioned, was not only incompatible with existing circumstances, but might serve to confirm those surmises lately entertained by the earl. But Lady Marchmont only laughed at his scruples, and made use of so many arguments in favour of a continental excursion, that Harold, at length, consented to set out for Dover the following morning, though he was secretly determined, the moment he arrived in France, to put a decided negative on the latter part of her ladyship's proposal, since his character and reputation had already suffered too deeply from past imprudence, to permit of such a glaring contempt of public opinion, as would be testified by this proceeding.

"To-morrow, then, Harold," exclaimed Albina, as she arose to depart, "you

commence your journey, the secret of which must, at present, rest with me. If any assistance is necessary you know where to apply ; and, in a short time, I trust we shall meet again."

Harold could not respond the expression of this wish, but he gracefully thanked Albina for those offers of friendship which he had every reason to suppose sincere ; and, as he took her hand to conduct her to her carriage, an involuntary impulse led him to imprint a farewell upon the lips of her who was, he believed, the only being that really felt an interest in his welfare. At this action, the swelling heart of the impassioned Albina would no longer allow her to retain her late assumed appearance of reserve and indifference, and, flinging herself into the arms of Harold, she gave way to a passion of sighs and tears, which the latter vainly attempted to controul, and they were still in this situation, when a glass door, at the further end of the apartment,

was suddenly thrown open, and Lord Marchmont entered, accompanied by two of his most intimate friends, and Mrs. Lewson, her ladyship's woman, who had a short time before been discharged, in a fit of pique, from the service of Albina.—At the sight of her husband Lady Marchmont immediately fell into violent hysterics; while the former, without regarding her, addressed himself to Harold, whom he upbraided, in terms of the keenest reproach, for his violation of the rights of friendship and hospitality, during the period of his fatal visit to Lime Grove.

Abashed and confounded, Harold stood in silent confusion before the man he had wronged, unable to vindicate his conduct, yet conscious that he was not guilty to the full extent of his lordship's accusations. On himself only it depended, by a single word, to refute the charge of seduction now brought against him; but a principle of honour (perhaps mistaken

and fastidious) closed *his* lips, and his silence was construed into an acknowledgment of his guilt by Lord Marchmont and his companions.

“ You think, perhaps,” continued the former, after he had exhausted every possible expression of his resentment, “ that the injury I have received may be expiated by your giving me satisfaction (as it is termed) for the offence ; but I do not chuse to hazard my own life against that of the man who has wronged me. This chimerical vengeance is not the kind which I demand. The laws of my country will entitle me to a legal restitution for the crime you have committed, and you may shortly expect to answer for it, not in a court of ideal honour, but of impartial and substantial justice. You are witnesses, my friends,” he continued, to the gentlemen who accompanied him, of what you have heard and seen here, which the evidence of Mrs. Lewson will corroborate. As to you, my lord,” again

addressing himself to Harold, “ I have only to add my request, that you will inform yon guilty and ungrateful woman, that she does not again enter the house of the husband she has dishonoured ;”—and, without deigning another glance at the still insensible Albina, Lord Marchmont quitted the apartment, accompanied by his two friends, and followed by Mrs. Lewson.

It is not in the power of language, however eloquent, to convey an adequate idea of the feelings of Harold, at a scene whose consequences presented themselves in the most dismal colours to his appalled imagination. The blow he most dreaded, and to avoid which he had so long submitted to a painful sacrifice of every consideration of propriety, every individual inclination, was now fallen upon him with a violence which almost crushed him beneath its weight ; and, shrinking from the impending disgrace and ruin, he vainly endeavoured to discern a gleam of

hope, which might point out to him a possibility of escape. Alas ! all was dark and cheerless ; and, in the agony of his present feelings, one idea only was fraught with comfort—the melancholy thought that his mother had been spared the anguish of this bitter hour. From reflections like these, he was recalled, by an accidental glance at Lady Marchmont, whose deep sighs denoted her returning respiration ; and humanity prompted him to summon that assistance which her situation required. The application of proper restoratives soon revived those faculties which shame and terror had suspended ; and, on learning from Harold the particulars of what had occurred, Albina fell at his feet, while in a voice of agonized emotion, aided by all the irresistible eloquence of tears and sighs, she conjured him not to abandon her. On the heart of the latter the charms and blandishments of Lady Marchmont had long since lost their power ; but that

heart was too tender, too susceptible, to be unmoved at the sight of her distress—and, raising her from her lowly posture, he endeavoured to soothe the anguish which he had, in some measure, occasioned, while his own looks expressed only the bitterness of despair.

Beguiled by the softness of his manner into a belief of her former empire not being entirely extirpated, Lady Marchmont caught a glimmering of hope, on which to feed an unextinguished passion, from her present desperate situation, and again giving way to a burst of anguish, once more implored Harold not to desert her.

“Albina,” he replied, “what is it you would require? Sullied in fame—blasted in happiness—I now stand before you the veriest wretch on earth, whom one fatal transgression has overwhelmed with everlasting misery and dishonour. Every way have you undone me—what then remains to complete the immolation of your victim?”

The heart of Lady Marchmont throbbed indignantly at reproaches which its own recollections told her were deserved ; but this was not a moment for the expression of her resentment : and stifling the rising spark, she addressed Harold in the soothing language of tenderness and commiseration, to which he only replied by repeating his former enquiry of “ What she would wish to be done ? ”

“ To me,” answered Lady Marchmont, “ there appears only one plan which is worthy to be pursued. Let us, since we are involved in the same destiny, mutually endeavour to aid each other in sustaining it. What should prevent our immediately flying to the continent ? ”

Harold started with a mingled emotion of surprise and dismay. “ And what happiness, Albina,” he exclaimed, “ can you propose to yourself in sharing the destiny of a man whom you have confessed to be now an object of indifference ? ”

“ I said so, it is true ; but in this point

only, Harold, has Albina deceived you. To obtain your confidence, to enjoy your society, I affected to regard you with the cold and unimpassioned sentiments of common friendship. The delusion is now useless ; and hear me here avow, that never in the halcyon days of happy love were you so dear to me as at this moment, when I behold myself the willing victim of my attachment. Oh ! then, Harold, let me partake your destiny whatever it may be. I despise reproach—I dread not poverty. None can ever feel, ever do so much for you as Albina ; and if your ungrateful heart refuses me its love, I will not trouble you with my complaints. I only ask to follow you—to serve you to the latest hour of my existence.”

“ And do you forget, Lady Marchmont,” said Harold, in an impressive tone, “ that I am a husband ? ”

“ True ! of a wife to whom even Albina may be considered guiltless, since my destiny did not unite me to a Harold.

Lady Emily no doubt will receive with smiles of welcome, the man whose hands are still crimsoned with the blood of her Fitzalbin."

Harold sighed and shuddered.—"Yes !" he exclaimed, " my fate is, indeed, accursed, and the wrongs of Lord Marchmont are now avenged on my own head ; but I will not, Albina, either deceive you or myself. Nothing can ever renew again the delusion which has undone me—the voices of the living and the dead alike plead against it, and the confession you have just made only aggravates my misfortune, without the possibility of its shaking my resolution. I have promised you my friendship, and you shall never find it deceive your expectations in the hour of necessity or distress ; but whatever may be our individual destiny, from this moment we meet no more. Stigmatized as I shall be by the world, I will at least escape the reproaches of my own heart, which has already suffered too

keenly from the pangs of remorse to become again its voluntary victim; and however the conduct of Lady Emily might authorize my breach of faith, there is a dear and silent monitor, which bids me "Hear not the voice of the charmer, sweet though it be and fascinating to the enchanted senses."—And as he spoke, Harold unconsciously pressed his hand where the cherished image of Gabrielle rested against his heart.

Lady Marchmont was astonished and dismayed at a resolution which she had not expected from a man whose situation appeared so desperate that it seemed scarcely to admit of aggravation. All the eloquence of beauty and sorrow, every appeal to his honour, his generosity, his compassion, were alike exerted to overthrow it; but though the heart of Harold was agonized, he continued inflexible, while he gently endeavoured to convince Albina of the guilt attached to her past

conduct and the necessity of a timely repentance.

Disappointed in the hopes she entertained of the effects of grief and tenderness upon the susceptible nature of the man whom she had undone, Lady Marchmont had now recourse to reproaches, in which she openly accused Harold of being the cause of her present situation, by depriving her of her husband's countenance and protection ; " And I ! " she added, " fool that I was, have forsaken the man who doated upon me for one who despises the heart he has corrupted, and abandons me, without remorse, to grief and infamy ! "

" Stay, Madam ! " exclaimed Lord Harold, no longer able to controul his indignation—" You forget yourself, and what you were at the time when my unhappy destiny first introduced me to you. I then believed you pure as, I must still confess, you were lovely ; but my eyes have since

been opened ; nor did it require the confession of the dying Berrington to convince me that Harold is only *one* of your ladyship's victims. Your looks tell me," he continued, "that you understand the allusion, but be not alarmed ; I only mention it to moderate those expressions of violence which may indeed inspire disgust, but will never recall affection. Farewell ! and remember I would still be your friend."

As Harold ceased speaking, he moved towards the door, when Albina, convinced that he really intended to bid her farewell for ever, could no longer restrain those emotions, which had only been suspended in her heart by the influence of resentment. That criminal and fatal passion, to which she had sacrificed even its object, was entwined with every fibre ; and shrinking in agony from the idea of never again beholding the man whose peace and honour she had irreparably destroyed, indignation gave place to love, when, flinging herself before Harold, she

clasped his knees in the wild frenzy of despair, and vehemently conjured him not to abandon her.

It was a moment of severe and painful trial to Lord Harold ; for

“Though

’Twas a guilty flame and fatal to his peace,

Yet still she loved him,”

and the sight of her despair, her anguish, almost amounting to frenzy, made him tremble for the consequences ; but the dictates of honour and virtue sustained his resolution, and the voice of Gabrielle sounded in his ears, like the delegate of Heaven, and warned him to fly from the scene of danger. In a case like this deliberation was ruin ; and making a desperate effort to quell the struggles of his throbbing heart, he burst from the entwining arms of the weeping Albina, and rushed precipitately out of the apartment.

CHAP. XLII.

THE night was gloomy and tempestuous ; and as Harold, tremulous from recent emotion, proceeded along, his mind solely engrossed by reflections on the events of the last four and twenty hours, he was alike unconscious of the lapse of time, or the distance he had come, till a sense of extreme fatigue recalled him to recollection, and on enquiring where he was, of one of the patrole, he was answered in Chelsea. Harold started. "Am I so far from home then?" he involuntarily exclaimed, "and at this hour!—Home!" he mentally added, after a moment's reflection—"Alas! to what home can I return where my presence will be considered welcome!"—And, as if the idea inspired him with invigorated powers to fly from the scene of his disgrace and wretchedness, Harold again moved ra-

pidly forwards ; but nature, exhausted by want of rest and nourishment, as well as by a long continuance of mental agitation, could at length sustain no more ; and, on reaching an obscure street, in the vicinity of the river, he found himself so sick and giddy, as to be compelled to enter an adjoining coffee-house, where he immediately fainted away.

On reviving, he found himself in an apartment, surrounded by several people of an inferior description, gazing upon him with looks of rude and vulgar curiosity, while an elderly gentleman sat beside him, who seemed, from his appearance, to be a professional man, whom the people of the house had summoned to his assistance. On beholding him restored to recollection, he hastily cleared the apartment of the persons that filled it ; and, again approaching the couch where they had placed his patient, anxiously inquired how he was ?

Harold attempted to rise, but he was

so weak as to be unable to stand, and, sinking back upon the seat he had quitted, he faintly articulated, "The blow is at length struck—I feel that I am dying."

"No, no, my good sir," replied the doctor, "there is, I hope, no danger of that. Fatigue, or some other cause, has greatly exhausted you; but rest, and a little cordial medicine, will prove, I have no doubt, effectual restoratives."

Harold confessed that he had neither taken repose or nourishment for the last four and twenty hours, during which time he had sustained much bodily fatigue, as well as mental suffering; and having, in compliance with the desire of the good doctor, partook of a slight refreshment, he was prevailed upon to retire to bed, where a powerful opiate procured for him that repose which, in the present situation of his mind, would probably have been otherwise unattainable: and, while he is thus recruiting his wearied spirits and disordered frame,

we will briefly relate the particulars of those events which had led to the late transaction :—

The slave of her own violent passions, Lady Marchmont was no less subjected to the will of those whose knowledge of her irregularities had placed her character and reputation in their power ; and of these persons no one was so deeply implicated in the actions of her lady as Mrs. Lewson, who had at once been her confidant and auxiliary on many occasions, in which her advice and assistance had been found requisite by Albina. But, in proportion as she became the participator of her secrets, the submission and respect of Mrs. Lewson towards the latter continued to decrease, and the high spirit of Lady Marchmont sustained the most galling mortification from her insolence and impertinence, which she dared not properly resent, and could not entirely overlook. Continual quarrels were only to be obviated by expensive presents, as

bribes for reconciliation, and the purse and temper of Albina were subjected to demands, whose frequent repetition almost exhausted both. But, though paid so highly for secrecy, Lewson did not scruple, by oblique hints, to excite suspicions of those improprieties she would not openly reveal; and it was by this means that a report of his wife's guilty intimacy with Lord Harold first reached the Earl of Marchmont. Though a weak man, he was no idiot, as Berrington had once contemptuously styled him. Jealousy produced reflection, when many circumstances occurred, which seemed to confirm these newly-cherished surmises; and Albina found it the most difficult task she had ever undertaken, to convince him his suspicions were unfounded. Harold's marriage, added to the cool indifference they mutually testified, after the renewal of his visits in St. James's Square, abated, in some measure, the impression produced upon the mind of

Lord Marchmont, by the reports he had heard ; but they were soon destined to be confirmed, by demonstration too forcible and convincing to be rejected.

Irritated at beholding the inefficacy of her attempts to enthrall again the heart which had been emancipated from her chains, and burning with rancorous hatred against her innocent rival, the temper of Lady Marchmont became daily less capable of enduring the increasing insolence of her attendant, who had now thrown aside even the outward semblance of respect and attention ; and her impertinent familiarity, her neglect of even the common duties of her station, were, at length, so intolerably provoking, that, in a moment of extreme irritation, occasioned by her contemptuous behaviour, Albina imprudently warned Mrs. Lewson to quit her service. A little cool reflection convinced her she was wrong, but it was too late to repair the error she had committed. Lewson, who was no less weary of her lady's

caprices than the latter was of the ill conduct of her attendant, had taken her at her word ; and, neither offers nor intreaties could prevail upon her to resume her situation : and, regarding herself as ill treated by the woman who had been so much indebted to her fidelity and assistance, she secretly meditated a revenge, which accident furnished her with ample means of obtaining.

On the morning when Harold last called in St. James's Square, the man who had announced him to Lady Marchmont was a *cher ami* of Lewson's, to whom she had, in confidence, communicated all she knew and conjectured relative to her ladyship's intrigue with that deluded young man, whose perturbed and agitated appearance, as he conducted him to the boudoir, excited the curiosity of La Fleur ; and, concealed in the adjoining apartment, he was an unsuspected listener of all that passed between them, which was duly conveyed to Mrs. Lew-

son. Here, then, was an opportunity for retaliation, which might never occur again ; and, immediately proceeding to St. James's Square, she readily obtained an interview with the earl, to whom she revealed all the circumstances of Albina's infidelity which had come to her knowledge, concluding with the assignation she had made to meet Harold that evening at the house of Madame La Commode.

Though excessively shocked at this confirmation of his worst fears, and agonized by such an ungrateful return for his tenderness, from the woman he had idolized, Lord Marchmont was not so weak as to submit tamely to dishonour, which was too evident to admit of any doubt. His resolution was immediately taken—and, accompanied by two confidential friends, he repaired to Madame La Commode's, where they arrived a few moments after Albina. The surprise and consternation of madame may be easily

conceived, but her assertions, that no such persons were then in her house, failed of obtaining credit from her unwelcome visitors ; and, intimidated by the threats of Lord Marchmont, she, at length, confessed the fact. There is no faith with the wicked. The promise of reward soon brought madame over to the earl's party, and he was conducted by her to the apartment adjoining, from whence he both heard and saw every thing that passed between Lady Marchmont and Harold in this fatal interview : and, at the moment when the guilty Albina had thrown herself into the arms of the latter, as he was leading her from the room, Lord Marchmont and his party burst upon them, in the manner before described.—What followed, is already known—and they returned to St. James's Square, Mrs. Lewson exulting in the success of her revengeful designs against her wretched lady ; and the earl alternately execrating and bewailing the cause of his dishonour, and

brooding over the prosecution of his meditated vengeance upon the less guilty participator of her crime. Here then, we will, for the present, leave them, and return to Lord Harold, whom we left the inmate of an obscure inn, in Chelsea, where he had been detained, from the combined effects of corporeal and mental suffering.

It was past noon the following morning before he arose, refreshed indeed, but still languid and spiritless; and, as he sat at his solitary breakfast, revolving the events which had been accessory to his present situation, a waiter entered, with the newspapers of the day, which he laid upon the table before Harold, who, with the listlessness of an exhausted mind, slightly glanced over their contents; but the exaggerated details they gave of the late transactions tortured his imagination almost to agony; and, dashing them aside, he started from his seat, and traversed the apartment with un-

equal steps, and with an air of the wildest agitation. On every side he beheld himself pursued by reproach and infamy, conscious of deserving compassion, yet withheld, by the peculiarity of his situation, from offering any plea in mitigation of the sentence pronounced against him ; for could he be mean enough to avow to the world that Lady Marchmont had been his seducer, and that every succeeding circumstance of error and misfortune in which he had been involved originated in herself ?

“ No ! cruel woman ! ” he mentally exclaimed, “ I will not exculpate myself at thy expence. Thou wert born to be my destruction ; and the occasion of my crime, by a fearful retribution, becomes the instrument of my punishment. Righteous Heaven ! I acknowledge the justness of my destiny ; and even in this scene of desolation and distress, I thank thee that thou hast spared an angel’s heart the pang of witnessing her Harold’s ruin.”

Softened by the recollections which now crowded upon his mind, the violence of his feelings subsided ; and as he gazed upon the lovely image of her who was mouldering in the silent dust, his eyes were obscured by tears, and soothed and calmed by the contemplation, he was enabled to reflect with some degree of composure on his present situation.

Harold's first impulse was to repair immediately to Harley Street, and consult with Colonel Leslie on the best measures to be pursued ; but indignation at the supposed neglect of his friend made him averse to this proceeding: and in the present irritable state of his mind and feelings, he did not consider that the circumstance which had excited his resentment might have originated in some unforeseen cause for which the colonel would be able to account in a satisfactory manner. Alas ! the soul of Harold was at this moment incapable of calm reflection, the sense of guilt, the certainty

of exposure, engrossed and absorbed every faculty, and prompted him to shun all communication with those whose reproaches he anticipated with emotions of mingled shame, resentment, and anguish.

“No!” he exclaimed, in the agony of his oppressed feelings, “it is of little consequence what is my future fate, since there exists not a being who is interested concerning it. Wherever I go, contempt and execration will pursue me, and my only anxiety is to fly as far as possible from the hateful scene of my impending ruin.”

In conformity to these sentiments, Harold resolved on pursuing his original plan of immediately leaving the kingdom without furnishing any clue by which his friends might be able to trace his footsteps, should such a wish be ever awakened in their minds ; and as soon as the closing night removed the apprehension of his being recognized by a casual

rencontre with any one he knew, he quitted his present retreat with the intention of setting off by the mail to Dover, from whence he proposed embarking for France. In passing through Portman Square, an involuntary impulse induced him to pause a few moments before his own house ; but all there was dark and cheerless ; and shrinking from the air of loneliness and desertion which seemed to pervade every object, he mournfully turned away, and slowly pursued the road to Piccadilly, which he reached just at the instant that the mail was setting off. Two other passengers were there before him ; but the thoughts of Harold were too much pre-occupied for him to join in conversation with the strangers : and wrapping his great coat closely round him, he threw himself back upon the seat and affected to sleep, that he might give a more uninterrupted indulgence to the reflections which engrossed his mind.

The first beams of morning were slowly breaking in the eastern horizon, as they entered the town of Dover, and after securing a passage on board a vessel which was to sail in a few hours, and recruiting exhausted nature by a slight refreshment, Harold went down to the beach to await the departure of the packet which was to convey him from his native land. The surrounding scene was in unison with his present feelings, for the day was dawning with that kind of still and cloudy beauty which imparts, as it were, an evening serenity to the spirits enlivened by the exhilarating influence of morning's dewy hour ; and as he had strayed some distance from the frequented part of the beach, the various sounds of nautical toil and hilarity which rose upon his ear were softened by their remoteness to a murmur which soothed his spirits without disturbing the current of his thoughts.

The latter naturally turned upon the

extraordinary circumstances and situation in which he was then placed ; and the recollection of his former departures from England, and the events attending them, supplied sufficient theme for reflection during the hour he awaited a summons to the vessel in which his passage had been taken, and which he perceived lying off at a little distance from the shore, her white sails glittering in the rising sun-beams, and proudly stemming the rocking tide, whose frothy billows dashed against her prow.

From these contemplations Harold was at length aroused by the approach of a seaman, who came to inform him that it was time to go on board, as the packet was getting under weigh, and only waited a springing breeze to sail immediately. He instantly complied, and, seated upon the deck, silently watched the progress of the vessel as she glided from her moorings, and bounded with feathery swiftness over the curling waves.

The farewell shout of the mariner as she quitted the port, the different groups of spectators whom curiosity, or the desire of obtaining a last glance of their departing friends, had attracted to the beach; the shrill whistle and jovial song of the sailors on board, all he heard and saw was fraught with images, from which the desolate and oppressed heart of Lord Harold recoiled: and as the white cliffs of Albion faded from his view in the misty haze of distance, he turned away from their contemplation with a deep and lingering sigh, and felt that now he was indeed an exile and a wanderer.

In the course of a few hours, the footsteps of our hero pressed for the first time the Gallic shores; and not wishing by a long continuance in so public a place as Calais to expose himself to the recognition of any of his former acquaintance, who might be included amongst the groups of idlers whom curiosity or *ennui* had attracted from their native land, he

resolved on immediately removing to a more retired situation, where, unknown and unnoticed, he might quietly await the issue of those events which had been the occasion of his going abroad.

With this intention he left his baggage at the hotel where he then was, and proceeded to make an excursion in the adjacent country, with the hope of meeting a spot which might suit his present views. After riding some distance, his attention was attracted by a green and shady lane whose grassy sward invited the traveller to deviate from the beaten track, while the thickness of the embowering foliage offered an agreeable shelter from the fervors of a scorching sun, now shining in meridian splendor.—The temptation was too powerful to be withstood, his horse's head was instantaneously turned towards this verdant canopy of nature's forming, and the grateful coolness, the delicious fragrance of the flowers which sprinkled the turf, and entwined the hedge-rows,

were productive of additional pleasure to one so recently escaped from the heat and dust of a crowded metropolis, and the still more offensive filth and bustle of an extensive port. The lane terminated at length in a kind of green scattered over with wood, in the centre of which stood a cottage so beautiful and picturesque as immediately to fix the attention of Harold, who involuntarily stopped his horse to take a more minute survey. The vines and roses which mantled the low white walls and hung in pendant festoons from the roof, the rustic porch covered with woodbines, and the miniature garden dressed gay with greens and flowers, every object about this rural dwelling breathed of tranquillity and plenty, not the vain profusion of ostentatious luxury, but the bountiful provision of nature for the supply of her real wants. A farm-yard behind the house was scarcely seen through a break in the foliage that surrounded it, and on the green before the

door a few sheep and poultry were apparently enjoying life in their way, to as great an extent as the inmates of the pretty mansion, he so much admired. An impulse, which he could not withstand, determined him upon learning who these inmates were, and hastily dismounting from his horse he crossed the little garden and tapped at the door of the cottage ; it was opened by a young woman of genteel appearance with an infant in her arms, who courteously enquired what he wanted? —Harold, with some confusion, apologized for thus intruding, briefly stating, that being overcome by the excessive heat, added to a long ride, he had been induced, from the attractive appearance of her neat and pretty mansion, to request the refreshment of a draught of milk before he proceeded on his journey. The apology was readily accepted by the gentle mistress of this rustic abode, who invited Harold to come in with an hospitality so cordial, that he was unable to

refuse, and was conducted into a small apartment, whose furniture and decorations corresponded in their character of simple elegance to the exterior of the fairy dwelling. He was scarcely seated when his fair hostess disappeared, but returned in a few minutes, accompanied by two lovely children of ten and eleven years of age, who, after saluting the stranger, with a grace and frankness that surprised and charmed him, proceeded to assist their mother in spreading a table with such frugal fare as the mansion afforded ; it consisted only of excellent bread, fruit, and milk ; yet simple as was this repast, Harold found it delicious, and the nature of the present adventure seemed for a moment to revive in his bosom some of those fanciful and long forgotten feelings which he believed annihilated for ever.

The appearance of his fair entertainer and her children, their natural and unstudied graces, with that mixture of easy

good breeding, and frank simplicity so observable in their manners and deportment, all he saw was tinged with something of romance, and his vivid imagination, warmed by the objects around him, was again beginning to expatiate amidst visionary scenes, when the door opened, and a young man entered in a sporting dress, with a gun across his shoulders, who was presented to him as her husband by the fair Ninon, for so she was termed by the stranger, and from whom our hero now met with as warm a welcome as he had before received from his wife. The conversation soon became general, and Harold, whose curiosity was excited to the utmost, at length ventured a remark on the picturesque beauty of their present situation, the delight afforded by the touching view of domestic happiness before him; to which the stranger replied with a smile of complacency, "It is true, Monsieur; nor do I believe there exist on earth two beings.

more blest than myself and Ninon, notwithstanding our mutual misfortunes and disappointments."

"I was right then," exclaimed Lord Harold, "in my conjecture of your being originally formed to embellish a much higher station in society than the one you at present fill."

The stranger answered in the affirmative, and in the conversation that ensued he briefly detailed to the attentive Harold the events of his past life. The tale was simple and destitute of that romantic character which the latter had expected: It was a mere domestic history, a relation of disappointed expectations, of hopes and prospects destroyed by ill-placed confidence, and successful villainy, whose annihilation had compelled the narrator's retirement from a world where he had formerly made a distinguished figure as a man of fashion, and from which he had withdrawn to the small remains of his paternal estate, the cul-

tivation of which at once supplied the means of existence, and afforded a never failing source of rational delight and employment; “and I much question,” added the amiable St. Clair, as he concluded his little history, “whether both myself and Ninon are not happier now than we were in our days of affluence and splendor. We have no longer, it is true, a train of pampered and insolent domestics to attend upon us; but when I return home from my rural labours, my wife sweetens by her conversation and her smiles the simple repast her hands have assisted to prepare; for brilliant company and public amusements, we have the beauties of nature, and the society of each other and of our children. The accomplishments of former days are now called forth to embellish our retirement, and the voice of my Ninon as she sings the strains which charmed her Henri when he wooed, or peruses the authors her taste so well knows how to

appreciate, acquires additional sweetness, since it now breathes for me alone. I fondly flatter myself these sentiments are her's likewise, and that she agrees with me in confessing, that fortune still deserves our acknowledgements since she has yet left us love."

As he ceased speaking, St. Clair extended his hand to his wife, who, with eyes beaming tenderness, pressed it to her bosom, while a few tears dropped silently on her glowing cheek.

They were perceived by Henri, who, with an involuntary emotion of love and gratitude, gently kissed off the pearly strangers as he fondly drew her to his breast. Harold could no longer support a scene which pierced his heart ; and hastily rising, he took leave of the amiable pair, who earnestly intreated he would visit them again, and slowly and dejectedly returned to Calais.

Some days passed, during which he in vain endeavoured to find a residence

suited to his present plans and inclinations, and his mind still occupied with the fairy cottage he had so accidentally discovered, he resolved to repair hither and consult with its inmates on the practicability of his intentions respecting his future abode.

The reception he met with, was such as to encourage him to enter into a more minute detail, without, however, disclosing the particulars of his present situation, and the result was an offer on the part of Monsieur St. Clair and his wife for Harold to become an inmate of their mansion while he continued to choose the vicinity of Calais for his residence. The objections started by the latter, as well as the difficulty of arranging the terms of his stay with his hospitable hosts, were at length overruled, and the following day he beheld himself domesticated in a family where his comfort and accommodation were the constant care and study of every individual.

Many and painful, however, were the trials he daily endured from the sight of happiness in which he was destined never more to participate. The tender and perfect union which existed between St. Clair and his beloved Ninon, the pleasures they mutually found in their children, whose affection and docility repaid the tenderness so lavishly bestowed upon them, a thousand incidents, which had been unregarded by another, spoke volumes of torture to the bleeding heart of Lord Harold, and nothing but an unwillingness to wound the feelings of his hospitable and attentive hosts, could have still retained him in a situation fraught with so many sources of embittered remembrance. Often, however, when overcome by a view of the objects around him, he would fly from the social circle and plunge into the lonely wood, or traverse the sounding shore, while, in the stillness and solitude of night, he poured forth the feelings of an oppressed heart to

the hushed ear of nature, or wooed the muse to mitigate that mental anguish which it is her peculiar province at once to aggravate and to sooth.

Nearly a month had been passed by Harold in his present retreat, unmarked by any particular incident, when one morning, as he was taking his usual solitary walk by the sea shore, his attention was called off from the indulgence of his own melancholy contemplations by the approach of a small boat, whose passengers landed at a trifling distance from the spot where he stood, and, as they passed him, to his infinite astonishment he recognised in one of the strangers the features of his friend Colonel Leslie. An involuntary exclamation which escaped the lips of our hero at this moment, rendered the recognition mutual, and hastily springing forward, the colonel caught his hand, saying,

“ Great Heaven, my lord, is it you ? ”

For an instant Harold was silent,

while pride, resentment, and affection struggled for the ascendancy in his bosom, but the latter at length prevailed, and as he returned the fervent grasp of the colonel's hand, he exclaimed in a tone of mingled reproach and despondency, "And is Harold indeed become so great a stranger to his friend that his presence seems to excite astonishment?" "Pardon me," my lord, answered Colonel Leslie, "if the emotions of surprise, awakened by your unexpected appearance in this place have occasioned you a moment's pain. It is, I assure you, involuntary on my part ; for though the motive of my present journey was solely to seek you, I confess I did not expect to meet you here, and apparently alone."

"And may I ask, colonel," said Harold, with some degree of acrimony, "what were your previous suppositions as to my present situation?"

"I will be frank with you, Harold, even at the risk of incurring your dis-

pleasure. I understood you were residing *incog.* at Paris, and that the companion of your retreat was Lady Marchmont."

"And could you really believe that was possible?" asked Harold, reproachfully.

"My dear friend," exclaimed the colonel, "I scarcely knew what to believe. Your sudden departure from the place to which you had given me a direction, without leaving any clue by which you might be traced, without even waiting for my promised letter, all seemed to corroborate the reports which reached me from every quarter, since it seemed incredible that you should thus seclude yourself from your friends, unless actuated by motives which you dared not openly avow."

"And did you, then, really write to me, colonel?" asked Harold, and his heart thrilled with painful emotion, as the idea of Albina's treachery crossed his mind.

"I did," he answered, "soon after we parted, to inform you—"

"Of Fitzalbin's death, I presume"—interrupted Harold, impatiently.

"Fitzalbin's death!" repeated the colonel.—"Who told you Fitzalbin was dead? On the contrary, he still lives, with every prospect, I trust, of his final recovery."

Harold was too well acquainted with Colonel Leslie to believe it possible for him to be guilty of a premeditated falsehood, and the assurance that Fitzalbin lived, and that this intelligence had been communicated to him a few hours after the event of the duel, at once opened his eyes to the whole of the treacherous scheme concerted by Lady Marchmont to allure him from England, in the hope of becoming, however remotely, the partner of his exile. The plan was too evident to admit of a doubt, and since it was thus clear that Albina had deceived him in one instance, he was naturally led to

infer that she had done so likewise in another, and that Lady Emily was indeed as guiltless as she had been declared to be by the testimony of the then apparently dying Fitzalbin. A few weeks since, the heart of Harold would joyfully have expanded to the reception of this belief; but now it only served to augment the keen sense of his own situation, since, stained as he was himself with actual as well as imputed misconduct, her innocence would only render him more culpable in the eyes of those who were acquainted with the late extraordinary transactions.

Upon further enquiry he was informed, that though extremely dangerous, Fitzalbin's wound was not likely to be fatal, and that every thing was hoped for by his medical attendants from the calm and resigned state of his mind, which, though it had its source in an indifference for life, was an essential circumstance in favour of its prolongation. He heard likewise, that Fitzalbin had frequently en-

quired after him, and appeared desirous of an interview ; but it was evident, from the discourse of Colonel Leslie, that the former had not communicated to him the occasion of their quarrel, a trait of delicacy which pleased while it distressed Lord Harold, who was conscious that he did not merit such an attempt on the part of Fitzalbin to prevent, as much as possible, any further exposure arising from the late transaction.

“And now, my lord,” continued the colonel, “since I have succeeded in removing those apprehensions which the belief of Fitzalbin’s death had excited in your mind, let me proceed to enforce the necessity of your immediate return to England, if you would wish to obviate the ill consequences resulting from your precipitate departure—if you wish to regain that happiness which the demons of revenge and hatred have been plotting to destroy. Believe me, Harold, your

enemies have availed themselves but too ably of your absence."

"And Emily!" exclaimed Harold, in an accent of ill-suppressed agitation—"Does she also join in thinking me as culpable as I have been represented?"

"On that point, my dear friend," replied the colonel, "I am unable to afford you any satisfactory reply; but whatever impressions may have been made upon the mind of Lady Emily by the representations of those whose influence over her has not, I fear, been exerted in your behalf, they may still, I trust, be effaced. One supplication for pardon from the lips we love, carries far more weight with it to the heart of affection than the arguments of an assembled world. Hasten, then, my dear Harold, to England, and in so doing, at once confute the malignant reports of your enemies, and restore peace and confidence to the bosom of her who loves you."

“Were that conviction mine,” replied Harold, deeply sighing, “I had not now been an exile and a fugitive; weighed down with the sense of her indifference, as well as of my own accursed folly—”

“By Heaven! my lord,” answered Colonel Leslie, with vehemence, “you grossly wrong Lady Emily by such an unjust supposition. You may have been treacherously deceived by false representations; but that she has ever loved you with the fondest, purest tenderness, will, perhaps, be credited when I tell you that her life has nearly fallen a sacrifice to her affection.”

Inexpressibly shocked, Lord Harold was for some moments unable to reply, and when he again recovered the power of articulation, his enquiries produced the following particulars from his friend:

Apprehensive of the consequences which might ensue to Lady Emily in her present situation from hearing of the meeting which had taken place between

Fitzalbin and her lord, every precaution had been used by those about her to prevent the circumstance from being communicated ; and, accustomed of late to his frequent absence from home, the first day passed without creating any particular surprise or disquietude ; but when night came, and Harold did not return, she began to grow uneasy, and the cautious and evasive answers which were given to her repeated enquiries did not serve to remove her anxiety.

Morning arrived without bringing him back, and the uneasiness of Lady Emily was fast changing to alarm, when, as they sat at breakfast, she beheld a newspaper, he had just taken up, fall from the hands of Desmond, while an exclamation of “ Good God ! can it be possible ? ” burst from his lips.

Alive only to one apprehension, Lady Emily eagerly snatched up the paper ; when his absorbed faculties, recalled by this movement, Everard sprang from his

seat, while he addressed Lady Barbara in a voice scarcely articulate, exclaiming, "Keep it from her, for God's sake, if you can."

The warning came too late. One glance at the fatal paper had revealed to her the discovery which had been made by the Earl of Marchmont of his wife's infidelity, with the dreadful addition of the latter being then on her way to the continent, accompanied by Lord Harold.

A piercing shriek from the lips of the agonized Lady Emily informed her brother that she had seen the killing intelligence, whose sudden communication had deprived him of all presence of mind, and his extended arms involuntarily expanded to save her from the ground. Nature, however, was unable to sustain such a shock to its tenderest feelings. Successive faintings were succeeded by convulsions, and, in the course of a few hours, the premature birth of a daughter reduced

the lovely and unhappy wife of the deluded Harold to the most dangerous situation.

It is easy to conceive the sensations of those friends whose expectations and tenderness were all centered in Lady Emily at this catastrophe, and execrations against Lord Harold, mingled with the sighs which were breathed for the unconscious sufferer by her distracted aunt and sympathizing brothers. Alike insensible to their pity, and the tears of Lady Barbara, one image only engrossed the bleeding heart of the tender Emily, the supposed desertion of her beloved lord, on whose name she called incessantly in the thrilling accents of despair, conjuring him by every chaste and tender tie to come and receive the last sighs of the wife whose death would soon release him from those claims which his heart refused to acknowledge.

For some days the situation of Lady

Emily excited the most serious apprehensions in the minds of her anxious friends ; but youth and an unimpaired constitution, united to the cares of those around her, and above all the new and endearing claim upon her tenderness, thus recently awakened by the birth of her child, at length succeeded in snatching her from that fate which, for many hours, seemed impending over her.— With returning health, however, the bitter remembrance of the past recurred with augmented force to the unhappy Lady Emily, whose mind, influenced alike by love and resentment, became a chaos of contending feelings, whose predominance the slightest impulse was sufficient to determine. Unfortunately that impulse was destined to arise from sentiments the most inimical to every prospect of recovered happiness.

Severe in virtue, and inflexible in principle, the actual and imputed criminality of his misguided relative had made an

impression upon the mind of Lord Temora, which it was not in the power of any succeeding circumstance to efface, and the disapprobation he had long secretly felt at his conduct, now gave place to dislike and indignation the most inveterate and uncontrollable, which displayed itself in threats and imprecations against the man who had, by his profligacy, offered so palpable an insult to the family his alliance had disgraced.

To the exasperated Temora the sorrow testified by Lady Emily, for the supposed desertion of Harold, appeared an unpardonable weakness, derogatory to her own character, and the dignity of the house of Desmond, which the conduct and suspicions of the latter had so deeply injured ; and secretly resolved on dissolving (as far as was possible) a union, which had proved so fatal to his hopes and expectations, he directed his whole attention to effect this object. Though apparently difficult, he believed it would not be un-

attainable ; and this belief was founded in his knowledge of Lady Emily's character, which, extreme in all things, might, he thought, by a little management, be rendered subservient to his present views.

The affection she cherished for Harold had been ardent, even to excess, but the apparent indifference and neglect produced in the latter, by the artful insinuations of Lady Marchmont, combined with the idea of his total desertion, had served, in some measure, to chill the warm glow of tenderness in the bosom of Lady Emily, and Lord Temora, whose penetration was not slow in discovering the present state of her mind, eagerly availed himself of so favourable an opportunity to increase the irritation of wounded sensibility, by representing the principles and conduct of Harold in the most odious and degrading light. Nor was there wanting an able and ready auxiliary to this design, in Lady Barbara Desmond, whose

dislike of Harold was scarcely less inferior to his own, and who bitterly deplored the union she had so much laboured to promote, and from which she had prognosticated results of a very different nature.

Assailed by their united arguments and representations, Lady Emily, almost unconsciously, yielded to an influence, whose tendency was to change the soft and balmy tide of love and pity into bitterness and hate. The gentle pleadings of nature and tenderness, in behalf of the man she had so fondly idolized, were stifled by suggestions of his unworthiness; and resentment, arrayed in the garb of pure and insulted virtue—that garb so often assumed by the cold and heartless pretenders to superior excellence—banished pity and forgiveness from their most beloved and dearest abode—the breast of woman.

The prospect of a final separation from Lord Harold, which, a short time before, would have wrung the heart of his wife

with the most acute anguish, gradually became supportable, if not welcome. She was assured that a sense of her own dignity, the dignity of offended virtue, demanded the sacrifice ; and, carried away by her usual enthusiasm, Lady Emily yielded, without reflection, to the impulse of the present feeling, and promised her brother and Lady Barbara to be guided entirely by their judgment and advice. Such were the plans directed against the peace and happiness of the devoted Harold, during this period of his absence from his native land ; and the only person whose interest in his fate, neither existing circumstances, nor his own apparent neglect and ingratitude, had been able to weaken, unfortunately possessed too little influence to oppose the torrent which now menaced destruction to the peace and character of his friend.

Confiding, however, in the long cherished affection of Lady Emily for Harold,

Colonel Leslie still flattered himself that much might be effected by his return to England, could any means be devised of dissolving the entanglement, which he erroneously supposed was the cause of his present detention abroad. That Lady Emily would, unmoved, behold the man she had so tenderly loved, full of contrition for the past, and anxious to atone, by his future conduct, for a crime which his heart had no share in committing, appeared impossible; and, prompted by the generous wish of restoring confidence and comfort to two beings whom an unfortunate combination of circumstances had alienated from each other, Colonel Leslie resolved on immediately setting out in quest of our hero; and, with no clue to his researches but vague and contradictory report, he accordingly commenced the journey, with the result of which we are already acquainted.

Many and painful were the reflections which engrossed Lord Harold during the

recital of his friend. The humiliating sense of his own misconduct, indignation at the advantage taken, by his relatives, of his absence, to subvert the mind and feelings of Lady Emily, combined with some share of resentment against the latter, for so easily permitting the opinions and prejudices of those around her to influence her sentiments, all served to produce a contrariety of feelings, which rendered him for some time incapable of calm deliberation. The result, however, when reflection again resumed her wonted power, was a determination to comply immediately with the advice of Colonel Leslie to return to England without delay. "When danger," he observed, "can be avoided by retreat, it is prudent and justifiable to embrace it; but, when that becomes impolitic or impossible, a wise man will resolutely prepare to face the impending peril, and, by opposing, conquer. The mischief occasioned by your absence, your presence only can

repair ; and, if I mistake not, the machinations now concerting against you, will then prove as futile, as they have hitherto been successful."

Harold promised the colonel to yield implicitly to his directions, and the necessary preparations being soon made, the following morning once more beheld our hero on his way to the British shores, which they reached in safety, after a short and pleasant voyage, and immediately, on landing, set out for London.

The spirits of Lord Harold, which the hurry of their precipitate departure, and a diversity of objects had, till then, maintained in some degree of composure, began to fail, as they approached the metropolis. Every step, as it brought him nearer, served to augment his agitation ; and, when the post-chaise stopped at Colonel Leslie's, the latter perceiving how much he was affected, insisted upon his alighting, for a short time, to recover himself, before he proceeded to his own

house. To this proposal Harold but feebly objected, for, with an emotion, often experienced in similar circumstances, the eagerness to ascertain his fate, which had hitherto made the journey appear insupportably tedious, now failed him entirely, and gave place to an earnest desire to defer, still longer, the dreaded and inevitable moment which was to decide his future destiny.

Anxious to give a turn less really painful to his thoughts, Colonel Leslie endeavoured to divert the attention of Harold to matters of more general interest ; and it was not till after he had prevailed upon him to partake of some necessary refreshment, that he would hear of his going to Portman Square. His impatience and anxiety became at length too great to admit of any further control, and the colonel believing a longer state of suspense might only be productive of still more serious consequences, did not again attempt to oppose his wishes.

A coach was accordingly called, and accompanied by Colonel Leslie (who thought his presence might not be altogether useless to his young friend), Harold once more proceeded to that home where the sweetest and happiest hours of his life had been passed under the fond and anxious eye of maternal affection, which had witnessed the growth of his early love for Gabrielle Montgomery, and which he now approached with the sensations of a criminal who goes to meet a rigid and inexorable judge.

Not a word was spoken during their short ride ; but, as they alighted, Harold was compelled to lean for support upon the arm of Colonel Leslie, who trembled nearly to an equal degree with himself, while he faltered out an enquiry after Lady Emily of the servant who admitted them.

“Her ladyship is not in town, sir,” answered the man, directing a glance of surprise and apprehension towards Ha-

rold, whose whole appearance was too indicative of mental disorder not to attract immediate observation.—“She left London almost a month ago, with my Lord Temora and Lady Barbara Desmond.”

“And where are they gone?” asked the colonel, for Harold was himself too much agitated to be capable of speaking.

The answer was—“to Ireland,” with the additional information, that letters addressed to her lord from Lady Emily and her brother had been committed to the care of her banker as the most probable channel of communication with the Exile, of whom no intelligence had been received by his own family since his departure.

Harold still continued silent, apparently absorbed in reflections, whose poignancy was but too legibly impressed on every line of his eloquent countenance, and anxious to shun the remarks of the domestics, whom the news of their lord’s

arrival had now brought about them, Colonel Leslie took the passive arm of his young friend, who looked as if scarcely conscious of existence, and led, or rather supported him to the library, when, flinging himself into a seat beside him, he eagerly demanded "what was to be done?"

"Send for the letters immediately," answered Harold, speaking with difficulty, and a few lines being penned by Colonel Leslie to this effect were dispatched by a servant with orders to use all possible expedition in his return. The interval of torturing suspense which succeeded his departure was passed by Harold in a state of mind which language would prove inadequate to pourtray. The hopes and prospects of his future life seemed to be suspended on the event of the present hour, and alike incapable of speech or motion, he sat the pale statue of agitation and distress, till he was recalled to himself by the return of the footman with

two letters, which he presented to his lord and retired. Scarcely conscious of what he did, Harold tore open the first that offered itself, and with the eager and imperfect gaze of intense anxiety, hastily ran over the contents. It was from Lord Temora, and the violent and acrimonious spirit which breathed in every line immediately changed the agitation of Harold into resentment against the writer, whose relative situation did not, he thought, justify so gross a violation of decency and good breeding as was displayed in the injurious appellations and bitter reproaches contained in this epistle, which he indignantly threw from him, and, with a trembling hand, proceeded to open Lady Emily's. It was as follows :—

“ MY LORD,

“ When this letter reaches you, I shall be far from London and from England, never, perhaps to return thither again.— In the solitude and seclusion of Temora

Castle my life will henceforth be passed, remote from a world where I have experienced the extremes of bliss and wretchedness, and which I leave, without a single wish ever to enter more. After what has taken place, Harold, it would be impossible for me ever to be happy with you again ; the ties which once united us are dissolved, and distrust and conscious duplicity must in future usurp the breasts where confidence and affection should reign unrivalled.

“ My present opinion has been the result of long and mature deliberation, and the conviction that my resolution will not disturb the repose of the favoured lover of the beautiful Albina, will render the struggle it would otherwise have cost me less trying and severe. I refrain from reproaches, since reproaches would now be useless, though they might well be allowed to the woman whose husband would have sought to palliate his own infidelity by impeaching a name which

defies even malice itself to sully by a whisper ; but I will forbear a retrospection so painful and humiliating, and refer you to the unbiassed feelings of your own heart to acquit me of a suspicion, equally degrading and unworthy of yourself and me.

“ Whatever arrangements you may consider necessary on the present occasion may be finally settled through the medium of my brother Temora, to whom I shall in future consider myself responsible for my actions, and from whom I must look for that countenance and protection which I can elsewhere no longer claim. Any attempt to shake my present resolves would be useless on your part, even if I could suppose for a moment it was likely to be made ; and if you regard my peace or your own, you will readily acquiesce in a decision which is the only possible means of insuring either. Farewell ! What is past I forgive and pity. You have my best wishes for your

future happiness, if happiness can ever be an inmate of your bosom ; but love, which none but Harold had ever power to awaken, his deceit and perfidy has for ever banished ; and his torch, which once glowed with a lustre warm and radiant as the flame it kindled, is now for ever extinguished in the breast of

“EMILY.”

The paper he held fell from the hand of Harold, and the tear which had started to his eye as he perused it was hastily dashed off the glowing cheek, where the deadly paleness of agitated feeling had given place to the burning flush of resentful pride and wounded sensibility.—“Yes !” he exclaimed, after a momentary silence, “it is just, that the erring and infatuated Harold should endure the punishment his folly merits--yet, Oh ! Emily, to be thus condemned—thus forsaken by thee, without vouchsafing me even one poor token of forgiveness and regret—

without even allowing me an opportunity of extenuating my past conduct. Culpable as I may have been, this retribution is surely too cruel and severe."

"And will you, my lord," asked Colonel Leslie, as he returned Lady Emily's letter to his friend, "thus easily relinquish every prospect of domestic happiness without any effort on your part to efface the injurious impressions infused by the influence and insinuations of those around her into the mind of your too susceptible wife?"

"The attempt would be useless, colonel," replied Harold, haughtily; "nor do I feel disposed to subject myself to the probability of a repulse. Let Lady Emily continue in her erroneous belief, that the heart she has thus spurned is indeed as depraved as it has been represented by the envy and malignancy of those who are alike strangers to its failings and its worth. She at least should have judged more leniently, and I yield to my destiny

with less regret, since the pleadings of pity in behalf of love have been unable to influence a breast where I once believed him throned for ever. To her present decision will I leave her, and to that proud and chilling virtue that, wrapped up in the belief of its own infallibility, deigns not to forgive in others the frailties from which it is itself exempted."

Colonel Leslie reasoned, expostulated, and intreated, but to no purpose. The bosom which one symptom of tenderness and forbearance from Lady Emily would have subdued and melted even to weakness, was completely steeled by her obduracy and apparent indifference. The feelings of a noble mind, conscious of error, and anxious to make atonement, were stifled in their birth by wounded pride and mortified self-love, and under the influence of these contending sentiments, Harold, without further reflection, immediately wrote a few lines in answer to Lady Emily, briefly signifying his entire

acquiescence in the proposed plan, and desiring her ladyship would make such arrangements on the occasion as were most agreeable to herself. To Lord Temora's letter he did not deign a reply, nor did he enter into any explanations, which, by disclosing the scheme of art and treachery employed against him, could not have failed to extenuate his own conduct, and efface from the mind of Lady Emily the impressions which it had imbibed; but the throb of lacerated feeling had absorbed every other sensation in the heart of Harold, and he scorned to attempt a vindication, which he conjectured would be ineffectual for the purpose proposed.

With an emotion of extreme regret, Colonel Leslie beheld the dispatch of an epistle which was destined, he feared, to close up every avenue to returning happiness, which might still have remained open to his unfortunate friend, whose precipitancy he condemned, though he felt for and forgave the motives which

prompted his present conduct. When a person of high spirit and susceptible heart has unhappily wandered into the thorny mazes of error and delusion, the voice which first greets their return to the path they had quitted should be that of kindness and forbearance ; but when keen reproach or harsh disdain usurp their place, the consequences are too often fatal, and a temporary aberration is frequently converted into a fixed and inveterate habit. The aching heart of Lord Harold sighed for pity for past and present sufferings, and anticipated pardon for errors whose consequences he had but too severely experienced. From one quarter only had he dared to seek them ; but disappointed in his expectations, his new blown hopes of happiness, his fervent resolutions of virtue, were all crushed and withered in the bud, and spurned by the breast which might have cherished them, with exhausted feelings and blighted affections, he beheld himself again thrown

back upon a world which was to him only a desert, a scene of joyless solitary existence.

To the entreaties of the colonel, that he would endeavour to obtain an interview with Lady Emily, Harold gave a decided negative. "It would answer no purpose," he observed, "but to create unnecessary pain to both parties, and had consequently better be avoided."

"And your child, my lord," continued Colonel Leslie, "whom you have never yet beheld? Can you possibly resolve on withholding from her a father's blessing?"

"Forbear! forbear, my friend!" exclaimed Harold, in much agitation, "I cannot support these cruel interrogations. I have a feeling heart, and every one with whom I am connected seems combined to rend it in pieces.—Yes," he resumed, after a moment's silence, and in a tone expressive of tenderness and grief, "may the blessing of thy father rest upon *thee*,

sweet innocent, though thou, perhaps, wilt be taught to execrate his name : but no ;” he added, “ the voice of Nature will be heard when she pleads a parent’s cause in the bosom of his child, and my daughter will yet love me, in despite of malice and of prejudice.”

“ Then you have no desire to behold her, Harold ?” again demanded the colonel.

“ It would at present be a wish,” replied he, “ whose attainment involves too many painful circumstances to be attempted. Hereafter, perhaps—” he paused, sighed deeply, and was silent ; when anxious to divert the train of ideas which were, he conjectured, revolving in the mind of his young friend, Colonel Leslie proposed their return to Harley Street, to which Harold made no objection ; for every object which met his eye in his own house was calculated to awaken at this moment the most painful sensations ; even the different articles of furniture, and the

various ornamental decorations of the apartment where he now sat, were fraught with associations, of which he might have said in the words of the poet—

“What did they there—and what at such a time?”

He readily, therefore, availed himself of the colonel's proposal, to make Harley Street his present residence; and, after a few necessary directions to the domestics in Portman Square, he bade a silent farewell to a mansion which he was secretly determined never to enter again, and from which he now departed with a heart torn by acute anguish, and deeply oppressed by the annihilation of those hopes, of whose existence he had himself been almost unconscious, till the moment when he was compelled to relinquish them for ever.

There is a certain point of sufferance beyond which the utmost effort of fortitude is unable to extend. During many

weeks Harold had been subjected to a stretch of feeling so continued and intense, that even reason itself seemed at times on the point of giving way beneath its destructive influence ; but resentment at first, and afterwards a latent hope of repairing the involuntary injustice he had committed, sustained him through the conflict of contending emotions which he endured. These motives for exertion were now no more : and as a bow, which has been too long extended, at length breaks, so the mind, after a certain degree of endurance, becomes incapable of further effort. All the powers of Harold now sunk at once, and illness, the result of a long continuance of mental agitation, combined with personal fatigue, and a total disregard of self-attention, rendered him, for many days, an object of the most extreme anxiety to his affectionate friend. But, though health again re-animated his enfeebled frame, it was not in the power of human skill to administer to the “ mind

diseased." The languor of cheerless despondency pervaded every faculty, which alike defied the efforts of reason and the effects of time ; while, secluded from all society, he nourished in solitude the seeds of that melancholy and misanthropy, which afterwards became his distinguishing characteristics, and acquired those peculiarities of habit and manner, that, during his subsequent residence in Switzerland, so much excited the curiosity and interest of Lady G. and her young companion.

Vain were the efforts of Colonel Leslie to rouse him from this state of torpor, which, to common observers, wore the appearance of serenity, but was in reality a total exhaustion of mind and sentiment. It was beyond cure, and, as such, a quiet despondency was at least preferable to the impatience of irritable feeling ; he, at length, ceased to notice it, and suffered him to indulge, without molestation, in

that frame of mind which seemed most congenial to his present inclinations.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered from the effects of his late illness to encounter so painful a trial to the sensibility of a heart conscious of error, and full of contrition for the consequences of his rashness, Lord Harold paid a visit to Fitzalbin, to whom he had previously written an assurance that every sentiment of jealousy and resentment had entirely subsided. He found him still suffering severely from the effects of his wound, which had reduced him to a state of extreme debility ; and his languid and attenuated appearance, added to the deep dejection impressed upon his countenance, awakened a new pang of remorse in the heart of Harold.

Nor was Fitzalbin less agitated at beholding the husband of Lady Emily, whose dejected manners corresponded with the sombre colouring of his mind, and whose looks bore legible traces of

acute and recent suffering. For some moments neither party was able to speak, and the silence was at length broken by Harold, who, in a tone expressive of mental anguish, excited by a view of the affecting object before him, implored Fitzalbin's forgiveness for the injury he had sustained from his intemperate rage.

“ Cease, my lord, I conjure you,” exclaimed Fitzalbin, whose weak spirits were unequal to the sight of his agitation ; “ you have no pardon to request, for no one, under the impression of similar sentiments and feelings, could have acted otherwise ; and had I been what you suspected, the severest manifestation of your resentment would have been too small a punishment. Let what has passed then be, from henceforth, consigned to oblivion, and do not permit any reflections on my individual sufferings to give you a moment's pain.”

“ That is impossible, Fitzalbin,” replied Harold mournfully ; “ and if you

regard my esteem, attempt not to palliate my rash and credulous folly. A child, an idiot, would not have been so imposed upon. Yet, though my fault was great, my punishment has surely been severe.— Forsaken by love, condemned by friendship, with a fame darkened by reproach ; a breast wounded by sorrow—to me the past presents only bitterness—the present compunction, and the future disgrace.”

On enquiring after Desmond, Harold heard, with extreme regret, that he had left London to join his regiment a few days after the event which had so nearly proved fatal to the life of his friend, and that the impression which he had doubtless imbibed against him, from this and subsequent circumstances, was consequently still operating, with undiminished force, upon the mind of Everard, who probably believed him as culpable as he had been represented by the malignant rancour of his enemies. The idea was painful, even to excess ; for Desmond was

one of the few beings for whom Harold cherished a sentiment of warm and genuine friendship ; and the conviction that they were parted, perhaps for ever, with opinions and prejudices so erroneous and unfavourable to the continuance of their mutual regard and esteem, was attended with a pang, as severe, perhaps, as any inflicted upon him by his present peculiar and distressing situation.

Painful, however, as this pang really was, it was inferior to the one sustained by Fitzalbin on hearing of the projected separation between Harold and Lady Emily ; and the distress he evinced, the repugnance he expressed, at the bare suggestion, would alone have been sufficient to efface every suspicion from the mind of the former, had any such been still lurking there derogatory to the honour and principles of the man he had so greatly wronged ; who now, with the freedom and fervency of disinterested friendship, earnestly conjured of him not

to cast away the happiness which still wooed his acceptance, and to leave no means untried which might present a probability of a re-union with Lady Emily. "That she loves you, my lord," said he, "I am well assured, and that with no common degree of tenderness. Why, then, suffer a sentiment of resentful pride, of fastidious delicacy, to keep you asunder? You may, indeed, have erred, but Lady Emily's affection ensures the pardon for which you plead. Oh, Harold, reject not the advice of one who wishes only for your mutual happiness, and who will, in the conviction, find a balm to mitigate the bitterness of his own fate. Do not obstinately adhere to a resolution which can only be productive of future remorse."

"It is too late," replied Harold, in an accent of suppressed emotion; "Lady Emily's inflexibility has sealed my destiny and her own. The latter, I trust, may still be happy; and for myself, I al-

ready anticipate the worst which can now befall me ;—the censure of the unreflecting many—perhaps the secret pity of the few, whose hearts are formed by nature of gentler elements, and who can sympathize with the sufferer, while they condemn the man. The heart which tenderness might have melted, contumely shall never subdue. The fate that awaits me I welcome without a murmur ; and, with a long, a last farewell to the imaginary visions of happier years, I yield with firm and unshrinking spirit to the destiny which henceforth dooms me a lonely, unconnected wanderer, divested of every relative and social tie, and anticipating only the stranger's fortune, and the exile's grave."

In vain Fitzalbin represented to Harold that he ought not to give way to such melancholy reflections—in vain used every argument to induce him to cherish hopes and prospects of a more cheerful aspect. Influenced alike by erroneous opinions

and resentful feeling, the latter was inaccessible to conviction; and Fitzalbin parted from him with extreme regret at the inefficacy of those arguments which friendship alone had prompted, and which had their source in a generous desire of effecting a re-union between two beings, whom an unfortunate combination of error and prejudice had assisted to divide.

In pursuance of his present train of sentiment, Harold sedulously avoided every thing which might be construed, by Lady Emily and her friends, into an attempt at vindication; and, with a heart alternately throbbing with indignant scorn, and wounded sensibility, he affected to behold, unmoved, the progress of those legal arrangements which were to impose upon him a separate and individual destiny from her's, who, if she had not been an object of impassioned tenderness, was the only being that, since the death of his ever-lamented Gabrielle,

had possessed a place in the affections of a now-exhausted heart. Unconscious of his secret struggles, and prejudiced against him by the united force of actual and imputed misconduct, the world accused the victim of a too susceptible nature of insensibility, and the want of every generous feeling ; while rumour, loud in his censure, invidiously sought to colour, with the shade of doubt and detraction, those actions whose real motives were only conjectured. On every side, Lord Harold beheld himself calumniated or condemned, and the stings of reproach and injustice aggravated those already inflicted by blighted tenderness. The gentle voice of pity, “ silver-toned,” was scarcely heard amidst the loud tumult of popular opinion : and of all those who had

“ Followed, flattered, sought, or sued,”

one being only, with the exception of his long-tried friend, Colonel Leslie, appeared to sympathize, at this period, in

the fate of Harold—the man he had wronged by his suspicions, and seriously injured by the effects of his intemperate rage ; but who now, beholding in him only the victim of a ruthless destiny, nobly stood forth in his behalf, and dauntlessly pleaded his cause against the rigid and narrow-minded herd, who would desire to reduce to their own low and sordid standard, every mental and physical perfection, and would obscure all the beauties of natural and intellectual creation with a veil of hideous deformity.

From whatever cause the afflicted heart should experience an alleviation of its sufferings in beholding the aggravated woes of others, is one of those moral mysteries for which philosophers have never satisfactorily accounted. The fact, however, is undeniable, and was exemplified in the present, as in numberless other instances. The melancholy situation of Lord Harold, while it sensibly touched his feelings, served to reconcile Fitzalbin

in some measure to his own destiny, which he secretly acknowledged to be less worthy of commiseration than that of his friend, whose self-reproaches far outweighed the pain excited by a retrospect of past occurrences.

By a revolution of feeling, not uncommon to minds of acute sensibility, Harold, after he had once overcome his repugnance to a first interview, soon became extremely partial to the society of Fitzalbin, whose pensive cast of character was congenial to his own, and who soothed his sick mind by his unobtrusive attentions, and a ready acquiescence with his present habits and sentiments, which were at times eccentric, even to a degree of flightiness : but fate did not long grant him a continuance of this gratification.

The remainder of Fitzalbin's regiment was ordered to join the other battalions, then on their way to the East ; and, as the recovered health of the young officer no longer afforded him a plea for absence,

he was of course obliged to accompany it abroad. A short time only was allowed for preparation, and as Fitzalbin was desirous of once more embracing his family previous to his departure from England, he was consequently under the necessity of immediately quitting London.

The last evening he passed in the metropolis was spent in the society of Lord Harold, whose dejected spirits were not cheered by the prospect of a long, perhaps an eternal separation from the only person, Col. Leslie excepted, who appeared to feel any interest in his destiny. They sat together till a late hour ; but the moment of parting, however delayed, must at length arrive, and Fitzalbin arose to go, when Harold, as he cordially wrung his hand, exclaimed : “ Many circumstances, my dear Fitzalbin, render it very improbable that we shall ever meet again. I trust you feel assured of my present esteem and friendship ; but at this moment I must frankly confess that there is one circum-

stance on which I have not been able to attain sufficient resolution personally to express my sentiments. I have therefore committed them to writing (and, as he spoke, Lord Harold placed a sealed paper in the hand of Fitzalbin). It is my request that you will not examine this till you arrive at the place of your final destination: but remember, that on the resolution you then take, must depend the continuance of our future friendship; for should you refuse a compliance with the conditions here mentioned, it must immediately terminate. You may consider my proceeding extraordinary," he continued, with a faint smile, "but from you I claim my ancient privilege of doing things my own way; and be satisfied that I will make no request which is not consistent with your honour and my own."

Fitzalbin promised to comply with his injunction, and Harold again fervently pressed his hand, as he added—"It is enough, my friend! I do not doubt your

word. Once more farewell ! may you be happy as you deserve : and sometimes amid the disgrace and desolation which surrounds him, bestow a sigh to the recollection of your exiled friend."

Much affected, Fitzalbin reiterated the adieus of Harold in a voice broken by emotion ; and the young men soon after separated with mutual expressions of regret and attachment.

As our military adventurer will not again make his appearance on the scene, and as some curiosity may have been excited concerning the contents of the paper presented by Lord Harold to Fitzalbin, we shall here briefly state, that it contained a deed of gift for five thousand pounds, to be paid immediately on demand, with the following :

" TO FREDERIC FITZALBIN, ESQ.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" To avoid the unpleasant task of combatting arguments, to which I was pre-

viously resolved not to listen, I have taken the present method of communicating my intentions which the inclosed paper will sufficiently explain. Think not, Fitzalbin, I seek by this proceeding to compromise with my conscience for the injury I have done you. Heaven is my witness that nothing could be farther from my mind; but though I can never forgive myself the rashness of which I was guilty, I feel that I owe you some recompence for past suffering, and I have fixed on that which appears capable of conferring the most permanent benefit. I know you to be above that abject littleness of mind which blushes at the suspicion of poverty, and that you agree with me in estimating one intellectual endowment, one emanation of genius, far above all the adventitious gifts of fortune. But that is no argument that you should reject her offered boons, when their acceptance is consistent with rectitude and honour. The change produced in my prospects and circumstances by re-

cent events, have circumscribed my wants and wishes to a very limited compass. In the days of happiness and gaiety, I might have said with the Poet—

‘ I have not lov’d the world, nor the world me.’

And now, when all its delusions have vanished from my view; when all around me is dreary and desolate, how gladly shall I turn from its gaudy pomps and tinsel vanities to seek an asylum in the bosom of Nature. There only, if ever! must I hope to find repose.

“ Suffer me then, Fitzalbin, from the superfluity of that wealth, which to me is now useless, to indemnify my friend for the injustice of fortune; to promote his success in life, and to perform one action, whose reflection will impart a ray of comfort to my aching heart. If you decline accepting my offer, I shall know how to estimate your friendship, nor shall I ever be convinced that your refusal does not proceed from a lingering sentiment of

resentment for my past conduct. Consider well ere you reject this proposal; and believe me, with every wish for your future happiness,

“Your’s affectionately,

“HAROLD.”

It is scarcely necessary to say, that the noble and liberal gift of Lord Harold was accepted by Fitzalbin with the emotions of gratitude and tenderness which it deserved, and that his subsequent promotion, and the independence he afterwards attained, had their first rise in the assistance thus bestowed upon him by the munificence of his generous friend, who had the satisfaction of knowing eventually that his endeavours to compensate an involuntary injustice had not been used in vain.

After the departure of his friend from England, the mind of Lord Harold became restless and unsettled, and his usual touching despondency gave place at

times to a flightiness of manner, a forced and unnatural elevation of spirits, that created serious uneasiness to Col. Leslie, who trembled lest this perturbed, and unequal state of mind and feeling, should at length terminate in a total alienation of the reasoning faculties. Every art that friendship could devise was put in practice to restore his tranquillity ; to rouse again those mental energies, those fine talents, which seemed now lost and overshadowed in the gloom of cheerless listlessness and despair. Dissipation and solitude were alternately recommended and pursued ; but the hollow smile of pleasure only mocks the sick and sorrowing heart, and the solitude of a crowded metropolis may create a sense of loneliness, but cannot inspire tranquillity. Thus situated, Harold's mind began to wander, and he was fast sinking into a state of all others the most dreadful and lamentable, when an accidental proposal from a party of gentlemen, with whom he was slightly

acquainted, to accompany them in an excursion to the continent, fortunately removed him from a scene whose longer continuance might have been attended with dangerous consequences. The proposal was accepted, and the plan of his departure arranged, before it was communicated by Harold to Colonel Leslie, who, though surprised by the suddenness of his resolve, was not sorry at a project, which, by affording him a change of scene and society, might eventually prove of infinite benefit to his unhappy friend.

The spirits of the latter, which had apparently experienced but little variation when conversing on his proposed departure, failed him when the moment of separation arrived, and flinging himself into the arms of the colonel, he gave way to a burst of feeling which seemed to shake his frame, and for some time defied every effort of his friend to restore him to composure. "Oh, Colonel Leslie," he at length exclaimed, "dear and sympathiz-

ing friend, forgive the weakness of a heart whose every emotion has so often been confided to your faithful bosom, in those moments when my destiny has been the most severe, and have ever experienced your friendly support, your soothing kindness ; and can I, think you, be such a monster of insensibility as to quit you, perhaps for ever, without regret ? Oh ! believe me it was not possible. Never will your goodness be effaced from my remembrance ; never shall I cease to pray (if prayers like mine can ever hope to reach the Throne of Mercy ?) for your happiness ; and let me in this moment, when I may, perhaps, be bidding you an eternal farewell, intreat your forgiveness, if, in the anguish of acute feeling, or the peevishness of incurable grief, I have ever occasioned you a pang by my apparent want of gratitude and consideration."

Too much affected to reply, Col. Leslie could only silently return the embrace of

his young friend ; nor was the gallant veteran ashamed of the tear which hung on his sun-burnt cheek, as he pressed to his breast the changed and woe-worn being whom he had once beheld the object of general admiration or envy, the idol of his family, the happy and adoring lover of his own darling Gabrielle ; caressed and flattered by all that approached him, now desolate and deserted, the victim of solitary anguish—a lonely exile, pursued by reproach and calumny, and presenting that most affecting of all objects, a human wreck of beauty and intellect in their highest perfection.

“ You will write to me, Harold ? ” exclaimed the colonel, when his emotions again allowed him to speak.

“ Certainly, my dear friend,” he replied, “ if you desire it ; but little gratification, alas ! must you expect to derive from the correspondence of a being like me.”

“ It will at least give me satisfaction to be informed of your welfare ; and, believe

me, Harold, there is no one to whom that welfare is so dear as to your friend Leslie ; none who will feel so deep an interest concerning it : deprived of your society, my lonely fire-side will become still more lonely, and the only consolation which your absence will admit of must be found in your correspondence.”

With tearful eyes Harold repeated to Colonel Leslie his promise to comply with his request, who again strained him to his bosom in a fervent embrace ; and hastily tearing himself from the arms of this amiable and beloved friend he rushed from the apartment.

CHAP. XLV.

ON quitting London Lord Harold immediately proceeded to Llanivar, from whence he was to rejoin the rest of the party at Portsmouth, where they had agreed to await his arrival. Though well aware how much his feelings would be affected by this visit, he secretly resolved on its accomplishment the moment his departure from England had been finally determined ; not only for the purpose of making some necessary arrangements with his steward preparatory to a long residence in a foreign clime, but likewise from the desire he felt of again beholding a place he so much loved, and of shedding the sacred tears of nature and tenderness over the spot which enshrined the remains of his beloved and lamented mother.

The bright beams of a July morning glittered on their grey turrets, as Harold once more approached the ancient towers

of Llanivar, and the glowing beauty, the exhilarating cheerfulness which invested every object around him, presented a forcible contrast to his gloomy and despondent feelings, as throwing the reins over his horse's neck he suffered him to pursue his own pace towards the castle. "His wild deer grazed the forest shades" unmolested and unnoticed, and the summer breeze sighed sweetly among the waving woods, whose venerable branches would, perhaps, never more expand to shelter their exiled lord. As he proceeded slowly along, the peal of village bells caught his ear, as softened by distance they came with sweet and swelling cadence upon the gale, and while pensively listening to their "melancholy music," he felt them

"The tender thought recal-

"Of summer days, and those delightful years,

"When by *his* native streams, in life's fair prime,

"The mournful magic of their mingling chime

"First woke *his* wond'ring childhood into tears ;

"But seeming now, when all those days are o'er,

"The sounds of joy once heard, and heard no more."

All about the castle was silence, and

solitude ; the windows were chiefly closed, the gates fastened, and the long grass in the avenue had grown up to a degree of rank luxuriance ; a few straggling flowers were still visible under the drawing-room windows, which opened upon the lawn, but they bloomed with a kind of sickly beauty, which was in unison with the surrounding scene of loneliness and melancholy : “ Oh, how changed, how solitary,” thought Harold, “ from those days when the hand of taste converted this now neglected spot into a paradise of beauty and fragrance ! Alas ! those beloved hands are now mouldering into dust, and I only am left behind (the last of my race) amidst ruin and desolation.” All the domestics had been dismissed from the castle except the housekeeper, and old Morgan, the latter of whom now came out to meet his lord, with a countenance on which grief had imprinted deeper furrows than those of age ; and as Harold cordially shook him by the hand,

the sorrow of the old man, no longer to be restrained, burst forth at his eyes. Harold could not speak, and silently followed Morgan into one of the parlours, the window-shutters of which were unclosed, where, the first object that caught his attention, was an old and favourite dog of his late mother's, which had been left at Llanivar in the care of Mrs. Wilkins, the housekeeper, and was now lying in the place she had always been accustomed to occupy in the chimney-corner. From extreme age the poor animal was become almost blind; but she immediately recognised the sound of his voice as he entered, when she came whining towards him, and fawning upon him, licked his hands with every demonstration of recollection and joy.

“ Poor Dido ! poor Dido ! ” exclaimed Harold, as he warmly returned the caresses of the faithful animal, “ you do not then disdain to remember me.”

“ Poor Dido,” repeated old Morgan ;

“ she has seen many happy days under your lordship’s roof, and is grown old in the family, but, like me, my lord, she has lived too long, since our best friends seem all going before us.”

Harold’s heart, already deeply oppressed, was not able to sustain this, and, flinging himself into a chair, he burst into tears. Though greatly distressed, Morgan had sufficient prudence to forbear interrupting this indulgence of his emotions; and the former, as soon as he again recovered his composure, dispatched the old man to Mr. Dennis, his steward, who resided about a mile from the castle, with a request to see him immediately. He had scarcely departed on his embassy before the feelings of Harold were put to a new trial by a visit from Mrs. Wilkins, whose sorrow and loquacity were equally vehement and unrestrained; but she had been an old and faithful domestic of his mother’s; his infancy and childhood had received continual testimonies of her in-

dividual attachment, and Harold, though every word she uttered wrung his own heart, generously indulged the good creature in her lamentations over the late occurrences, and her regret at his approaching "banishment to an outlandish country," as Mrs. W. emphatically termed his intended residence abroad. Want of breath, rather than matter, at length failed her; when Harold, whose spirits were rapidly sinking, endeavoured to change the conversation, by inquiring "How things were going on at Llanivar?"

"Poorly enough, my lord," replied Mrs. Wilkins, "as they always must do when a great family, like this, leave the place where they have lived like kings and princes on their own estates, from one generation to another: I do what I can to keep things together, and have them look a little as they used to do; but I am now getting old, and past my work, and it is a large house, my lord, for a lone woman, like me, to keep in order."

“ At least you have found time, I perceive, to fulfil the charge you undertook of looking after poor Dido.”

“ Aye, sure, my lord,” answered Mrs. Wilkins, “ and mean to whatever else goes undone. We are growing old together, and, please God, nothing but death shall ever part us from each other. As your lordship may see, the poor thing is getting blind, but she can still trot after me about the house, and in the garden, and every morning she goes and lays herself down at the door of my Lady Harold’s closet, as she used to do while my lady said her prayers, when she was alive.”

Harold found his feelings again overpowering him; and, hastily dismissing Mrs. Wilkins with directions to prepare dinner for himself and Mr. Dennis, he walked out into the garden, whither he was followed by the faithful and affectionate Dido, wagging her tail, and barking as she ran beside him. Here, too, neglect and desolation again met his view,

and the walks overgrown with grass, the flower-borders choaked with weeds, silently confessed the absence of the cultivating hand which had produced their former neatness and beauty. The conservatory, where he first beheld Gabrielle Montgomery, still remained in its former state, but the plants were grown up into wild exuberance, and the creepers that entwined the inside of the walls were so closely matted together as almost to impede an entrance. Of her favourite boudoir, no vestige was left but the building itself, now converted into a depository for garden tools, and dried vegetables, which were lying in heaps upon the floor; and the trees and flowering shrubs by which it was overshadowed overhung the windows, and almost excluded the light.

Tears of bitter remembrance started into Harold's eyes as he gazed around; and hastily turning from this scene of mournful contemplation, he proceeded

back to the house, where Mr. Dennis had just arrived before him, and the remainder of the morning was devoted to business, which was scarcely terminated when dinner was announced.

Early the following morning the youthful lord of Llanivar departed from its ancient and venerable towers, having previously taken a cordial and affectionate farewell of old Morgan, and the weeping Mrs. Wilkins, to whom he presented, at parting, a token of his remembrance, and mounted his horse amidst the reiterated prayers and blessings of the worthy pair, who, with eyes dimmed by tears, stood at the gate of the castle looking after him, till his receding figure was lost in distance ; and when it was no longer visible, they returned, silent and despondingly, into the house, mutually mourning over the departure of the last of Harold's noble race, from that land where his ancestors had, for ages,

“Rul’d yon proud towers with lordly sway,
Beheld a menial crowd obey,
And wrought the generous deed that swelled the trump of
Fame.”

In the mean time the object of their lamentations pursued his way through the extensive domains of Llanivar, along the wood-fringed banks of the silver Towy, whose deep pellucid waters rolled beneath them ; and as his eyes once more paused on the purple summit of Grongar Hill, as it rose majestically over the vale below, the recollections of genius and of youth imparted a momentary glow to his oppressed bosom ; but when, on gaining the mountain’s brow, he turned round to take a last view of his natal towers, nature melted within him, and oft, like “the adventurous boy” in the beautiful description of the poet,

“He looks and weeps, and looks again.”

The venerable mansion, whose grey turrets rose amidst the dark woods that

embowered them, the blue smoke curling above the trees which marked the different cottages on his domain, the distant village and its church spire, half embosomed in elms, the vale, the mountain, and the stream, were all fraught with recollections of the past ; with those inexplicable feelings which are excited by the association of inanimate objects and moral sensations in the mind of man.

“ Ye dear and lovely scenes of infancy and childhood,” exclaimed Harold, as he took another survey of the prospect before him, “ fare ye well ! Perhaps I shall behold ye no more ; perhaps the eyes of your master may be closed in a distant land, far from the beloved spot which beheld their opening beam ! and thou, dear mansion, become a stranger’s home, whose heart will never thrill with fond remembrance to enter thy ancient walls. Once more, farewell ! Thy recollection will be to me like the sound of ‘ a very lovely song ’ vibrating on my memory ;

and may he, sweet spot, who shall hereafter possess thy beauties, inherit a happier fate than mine ;” and as he ceased speaking, Harold dashed away the tear which hung trembling in his eye, and, spurring his horse forward, was soon beyond sight of the towers of Llanivar.

We shall not enter into any details of a journey whose incidents have no reference to the present history, but shall briefly proceed to state, that after visiting a great part of the continent together, Harold and his companions mutually discovered that they were not suited to each other : the melancholy of the one and the hilarity of the others were continually at variance ; and, heartily wearied and disgusted, the parties at length separated on arriving at Paris, the jovial sons of pleasure on their return to England, and Harold to make a solitary excursion through a country, whose ancient character of heroism of principle and simplicity of manners had early impressed

his mind with sentiments of reverence and admiration, and which he was desirous of beholding under the new modifications which revolutionary horrors and demoralization were supposed to have given it.

The scenery of Switzerland was congenial to the taste of one who loved to behold the grandeur and sublimity of nature, where she reigns in silent, solitary majesty amidst her rocks, her mountains, and her storms ; and where man, lost in the contemplation of infinity, seems rather a beholder than an inhabitant of the world around him. In these Alpine solitudes, exposed to inclement seasons and extreme fatigue ; and absorbed continually in the profound and elevating reflections they were calculated to inspire, the mind of Harold, which had been depressed and enervated by the feelings of a too susceptible heart, again resumed a portion of its native vigour, and his manners, influenced by his general tone of thought and

sentiment, became frigid and reserved ; while, shrinking alike from the glance of casual curiosity and the expression of sympathy, his shy and taciturn demeanour, and his eccentric habits, procured him that character of a misanthropist and semi-maniac, which had been generally imputed to him in the vicinity of Geneva, where he had resided some time previous to the commencement of his intimacy with the family of Lady G.

But a frame and constitution, not originally very robust, were at length worn out by excessive and injudicious exertion, united to the continual workings and conflicts of the diseased mind, and illness was the consequent and inevitable result. Resolute in affording no clue by which curiosity might trace out the history of his former life, Harold had retained nothing in his possession which could lead to the discovery of his real name and situation ; and a letter addressed to a banker at Paris, with the signature of

Delamere, was the only communication which would have led his English connections to the knowledge of his decease, had it pleased Providence to terminate his mortal existence in the malady, whose eventful progress was related at the commencement of this history.

The cares and attention, however, which had then snatched him from the opening tomb had been nearly frustrated by the receipt of the following letter from Colonel-Leslie, with whom he had maintained an occasional correspondence ever since his departure from England, directed under cover to the before-mentioned Parisian banker, and forwarded to him in his assumed appellation of Delamere.

“TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD

“HAROLD.

“Though I am half inclined to quarrel with you, my dear friend, for your very long silence, I will wave for the present, the expression of my resentment,

in order to communicate to you a circumstance of far more consideration and importance, and which I should be sorry should first come to your knowledge through the medium of the public journals. The suit instituted against you by the Earl of Marchmont soon after you quitted England has been recently decided; and in consequence of your keeping back such evidence as could not fail greatly to have mitigated damages, they have, I regret to say, been laid at ten thousand pounds. Surely, Harold, you have acted indiscreetly in this business. What motive of delicacy and honour towards a woman of Lady Marchmont's character could be sufficiently binding to authorize such a sacrifice of fame and property as this occurrence must eventually occasion?

“ But I know your heart, and the proud resentful feelings that have withheld you from attempting any vindication of your principles and conduct to a world, which,

you think, has judged rashly and unjustly of them, as well as your generous reluctance to exculpate yourself at the expence of the sorceress who has undone you, and, however I may lament the consequences, I cannot much condemn the motive which actuated your conduct. I have sent you inclosed such extracts from the daily and periodical journals as have any reference to this affair, which nothing should have induced me to do but your own earnest desire and entreaty. I cannot, however, refrain from mentioning, that Lord Marchmont, with a nobleness and generosity which makes me almost ready to forgive him the prosecution of his vengeance against you, has assigned over to the faithless Albina the whole of the sum awarded to him by law for damages, as she would otherwise have been utterly destitute, her own family not being in circumstances to allow of their making any adequate provision, and she has, I understand, retired with this sum to

France, where she means to reside in future.

“But to one who has been so long accustomed to an almost princely affluence, and whose natural and acquired habits are all so thoughtless and extravagant, an income of five hundred a-year will be regarded as comparative poverty ; and divorced from her lord, separated from her children, and justly despised and detested by the object of her criminal attachment, a more severe punishment could scarcely, I think, have been inflicted upon Lady Marchmont than that annexed to her present situation ; since, to such a mind, the deprivation of grandeur and luxury, will appear a far more formidable evil than even that of life itself.

“Write immediately, my dear friend, and relieve the anxiety I experience on your account. Would to Heaven my arguments could prevail upon you to relinquish this desultory and cheerless mode

of existence, and to return again to the bosom of that society of which I am persuaded you might still prove the pride and ornament! But I dare not urge you on this subject, while you continue in your present sentiments.—Once more, let me hear from you immediately; and believe me to remain,

“Your ever affectionate friend,

“DONALD LESLIE.”

The extracts which accompanied this letter were of such a nature as might be reasonably expected, in a case, the circumstances of which were but partially known, and where the expression of detraction and malignancy bore an exact proportion to the admiration and envy formerly excited by their object. The effect they had upon Harold has already been related; but, it was not his pecuniary deprivation, however considerable, which would have occasioned such serious consequences as those which ensued.

It was the disgrace and odium attached to this exposure, and the painful and humiliating remembrances they revived in a heart whose wounds were thus forcibly again torn open, which, operating upon an enfeebled frame, produced the relapse of his disorder, that had nearly put a final termination to his life and sufferings.

The cares of strangers, who, like the good Samaritan, poured oil and wine into the wanderer's wounds, were again rewarded by his recovery; but his mind had sustained a severe shock, and the depression which succeeded his convalescence, served to corroborate the suspicions already excited of his present character being only assumed. The penetration of Harold was not slow in perceiving the existence of these suspicions in the mind of his friend Alicia; but it was long ere he could subdue his struggling heart to communicate the melancholy tale of his misfortunes and his faults. Gratitude, however, for the kind

and unwearied attentions of his friendly entertainers united with his repugnance to the idea of their receiving from another the first intimation of the fact, to overcome a reluctance, which had its source in the acute and delicate feelings of a proud spirit and sensitive heart, and finally led to that promise of implicit confidence, which was fulfilled the following day, when, seated in a flowery glen among the mountains, the purple clouds of evening sailing above their heads, and the blue lake expanding its sun-gilt waters beneath their feet, Harold revealed to the attentive and sympathizing Alicia the history of his former life.

The last faint flushes of departing light were trembling in the western heavens as he concluded the affecting detail; and, turning to his companion, whose tearful gaze had silently pursued the fading glory, till it was lost in dusky obscurity, "Such, my amiable friend," he exclaimed, "is the story of Harold's

fate. All radiant and lovely arose my sun of life, and the prospect of my extended horizon was bright and unclouded. But, scarcely had that sun attained its meridian, ere its morning splendours were overcast. Dark and stormy was its evening lustre ; and now the long, long shadows of an impenetrable night, have obscured it for ever. "Yon orb," he continued, pointing his extended arm toward the place where the sun had declined, "will again rise in all its former glory ; but the beam which gilt my path is extinguished, to shine no more. Gloomy and disconsolate must be my future way, till the tomb opens its friendly doors to welcome to his last home the exile and the fugitive. A wanderer in a foreign land, the hands of the stranger will grant the last rights humanity can claim, and a nameless stone be the only record which shall tell to other times that an unknown and solitary being had there found an obscure and unhonoured grave."

Such was the conclusion of the narrative related by Lord Harold, to which Alicia had listened with the deepest interest and commiseration, mingled with some emotions, of whose real tendency she was herself unconscious. From the first commencement of their acquaintance the appearance and manners of the young and interesting stranger had created a strong prepossession in his behalf, which admiration for his genius, and pity, excited by his apparent unhappiness, gradually augmented into a sentiment of warm and lively friendship ; but it was reserved for the present moment to discover to her the full force of the feeling, which, under that disguise, had stolen into her bosom, when the tale, which represented the object of her admiration and regard, in the new and sacred character of a husband and a father, awakened a pang too acute to be imputed to the influence of sympathy only, however strongly that sympathy had been excited.

Anxious, however, to conceal from the observation of Lord Harold the emotions which agitated her soul, Alicia made an effort to conquer them ; when the latter, whose mind was absorbed in the reflections produced by the recital he had just been making, suddenly arose, and offered her his arm to return home. Language, however eloquent, would have been, at this moment, a profanation of their mutual feelings ; and, silently placing her own within it, they proceeded slowly in their way back to the cottage.

Not a word was uttered during their walk, and the aspect of every surrounding object appeared in unison with the present frame of their minds, as, silent and sad, Alicia and her companion retraced their steps along the margin of the glassy Leman, whose waters, recently glowing with the gold and crimson tints of a brilliant sun-set, were now dark and ruffled by a chill wind, which heaved the waves with low and hollow murmur, against the

shore, and scattered the fading foliage, which shadowed the banks of the lake, in the path-way they were pursuing. It was one of those nights so often and so beautifully described by Ossian, when “the moon shines dimly through clouds, and the winds of autumn blow along the heath,” and alike affected by the scene and the tale she had just heard, Alicia’s tears, which she had hitherto repelled with difficulty, could now no longer be restrained ; and they continued to flow in silence during their walk home, apparently unheeded by Lord Harold, whose eyes, when they arrived at the cottage, betrayed that he likewise had been weeping, which she imputed to the recollections excited by their recent conversation in his mind.

During the remainder of the evening, a more than common abstraction seemed to absorb the former, who sat pensive, and almost silent, by the side of his sympathizing friend ; and the mournful ex-

pression of his dark and eloquent eye, when it accidentally encountered the glance of her's, tacitly indicated that his mind was secretly brooding over some newly-awakened theme of melancholy contemplation. The moment of separation at length arrived, and as he approached Lady G. to take leave of her for the night, she saw him change colour, and the tremulous agitation of his frame, as he offered her his hand, produced an inquiry from her ladyship of "Whether he was unwell?"

He replied in the negative; and extending his other hand to Alicia, "Good night, my dear and amiable friends," he exclaimed in a stifled voice; "Heaven bless and preserve you both, and sometimes in your prayers remember Harold."

For a moment he held their united hands in a fervent clasp, then suddenly relinquishing them, again repeated "Good night," and hastily quitted the apartment.

Accustomed of late to many eccentricities in Harold's behaviour, neither Lady G. nor her young companion attached any particular meaning to the emotions he now betrayed, and, as soon as they were alone, the latter communicated to her ladyship the recital which had been confided to her that evening. Though previously prepared by her observations on the melancholy character and dejected manners of her interesting guest for the reception of a tale of sorrow, the wildest conjectures of Lady G. would never have glanced at the detail to which she now listened with emotions of mingled surprise, indignation, and regret, and the tears she shed over the eventful history bore witness to her sympathy in the fate of him whose talents, whose sensibility, whose very errors in fact, had created a sensation of interest in her mind which she believed nothing would ever more awaken. "Extraordinary and unfortunate young man!" she exclaimed as Alicia ceased speaking;

“and is this then the termination of the brilliant prospects, the fairy hopes, which shed light and loveliness over thy path of life? Alas! they are fled for ever, and thou now standest alone in the midst of solitude and desolation with nought of what thou once wast, but that sublime and wondrous genius, that ‘unquenched spark of Heaven’s ethereal fire,’ which, to use the language of a bard, whose every sentiment presents an image of thine own, may he said to shine around thee,—

‘A gilded halo glittering ’midst decay,

‘The farewell beam of feeling passed away.’

“Methinks, my Alicia,” continued Lady G. after a momentary pause, “the reflections suggested by the history of our highly gifted and unfortunate young friend will serve more forcibly than any that have yet offered to reconcile me to the loss of that darling and regretted son, the promise of whose opening years was so soon destined to be cut off by the rude

stroke of death; and I am almost tempted to say with our favourite Ossian, 'Happy are they that die in youth, while their renown is bright around them,' if 'age is dark and unlovely,' what term can be found applicable to that state of existence, in which—

‘ Youth itself survives young Love and Joy,’

and when hopes withered, affections blighted, and fame destroyed, transform the vernal morning of life into a cheerless night of overshadowing gloom. Such is the fate of Lord Harold; and I cease, while I contemplate the melancholy picture, to regret the destiny which doomed my lamented Frederic to a premature but an honoured and glorious grave.”

As Lady G. ceased speaking, she silently wiped away a tear which contended with the placid smile of pious resignation on her expressive countenance, and tenderly kissing the cheek of Alicia, still

wet with the drops which sympathy had drawn from her lovely eyes, retired to her own apartment. Her example was soon followed by her young friend, but sleep was this night a stranger to the pillow of Alicia, who passed the hours devoted to repose in indulging the secret tears of sad remembrance over the history and sorrows of the unhappy and too interesting Harold.

The morrow, however, was destined to inflict a still keener pang upon her susceptible heart, when, after waiting for his appearance a considerable time beyond the usual hour of breakfast, the servant who was sent to call him returned with the intelligence of Mr. Delamere (as he was styled at the cottage) having left his chamber, but that she had found a letter on the dressing table for Mi Ladi G. which she presented to the latter, who, as soon as Lisette had retired, eagerly broke open the seal, and read as follows :—

“ TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
COUNTESS OF G.

“ I must quit you, my beloved friends ! I feel I must. Already are you become the objects of a dangerous tenderness, and if I judge aright, the sentiment of a mutual affection is no stranger to your bosoms. It is time, then, for me to be gone, lest the fatality which seems to hang over every being whose destiny is connected with that of Harold should also be communicated to you ; and for worlds I would not again endure the pangs of remorse for having conveyed wretchedness to the breasts of those I love. Let us therefore part while we can still part in peace and innocence ; and forgive my apparent ingratitude in thus clandestinely leaving you, when I confess that I was unequal to contend against the opposition I knew I should have met from your generous friendship, had I previously acquainted you with my intentions.

“ Adieu, then, my dear and maternal friend, to whose tender and unwearied cares I have been twice indebted for existence. Ere you peruse this, you will probably be more fully acquainted with the history of him whom you took in a wanderer and unknown, and poured into his wounds the balm of pity and consolation. To that tender and compassionate nature must I again appeal for commiseration ; and while you condemn the unhappy victim of infatuation and error, do not, I beseech you, disdain to shed one tear of sympathy over the recital of his sufferings.

“ And thou, too, sweet and amiable Alicia, in whose gentle bosom the sorrows of Harold found a ready and faithful sanctuary, do thou also receive his last farewell. Should we be destined to meet no more, accept my warmest, my tenderest, gratitude for your united goodness ; and be assured, that while the throb of life continues to animate my heart, it will ever retain their remembrance. Whatever may

be my future lot, the gleam of sun-shine which you shed over a dark and cheerless existence, will long be lamented by him on whom it was bestowed : but in the dreams of his rest only shall Harold again behold the lovely cottage on the lake of Geneva, and its beloved and regretted inhabitants.

“ Ye dear and cherished friends ! once more, farewell. Forget me not, I conjure you, however unworthy I may be of your remembrance, and let the name of the hapless Exile be sometimes mingled in the pure and pious orisons which ye waft above. It is uncertain to what remote and lonely region my destiny will now impel me—

• ‘The world is all before me where to choose,’

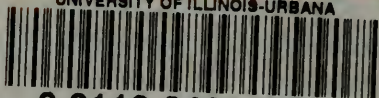
and to me it is a matter of indifference where the day dawns, or the sun sheds his declining lustre : but if at any future period you should hear of an unknown and solitary wanderer in a distant land, who

seeks, in the contemplation of nature and of man, to beguile the weary sense of his own fate, reflection will perhaps present to your imagination the idea of the exiled

“ HAROLD.”

THE END.

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